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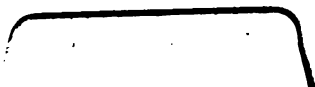
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AN
ESSAY
ON
PUNCTUATION
WITH INCIDENTAL
REMARKS ON COMPOSITION.

BY F. FRANCILLON,
SOLICITOR.

"Etiam cum judicium meum ostendero, suum tamen legentibus
relinquam."—*Quintilian*.

LONDON:
WHITTAKER AND CO., AVE-MARIA LANE:
RIDGWAY, PICCADILLY:
BANBURY: W. POTTS, PARSON'S STREET.
M.DCCC.XLII.

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A2 F7

TO
EBENEZER LUDLOW
ESQUIRE.
SERGEANT AT LAW
CHAIRMAN OF THE QUARTER SESSIONS FOR THE COUNTY OF
GLOUCESTER
AND TO
THOMAS NOON TALFOURD
ESQUIRE
SERGEANT AT LAW
SOMETIME A MEMBER OF THE BRITISH HOUSE OF COMMONS
AND
HERETOFORE RECORDER OF THE BOROUGH OF BANBURY
LEADERS OF THE BAR ON THE OXFORD CIRCUIT
THE AUTHOR
IN GRATEFUL ACKNOWLEDGMENT
OF THE
KINDNESS HE HAS EVER EXPERIENCED AT THEIR HANDS
WITH THEIR PERMISSION
DEDICATES THESE PAGES.

PREFACE.

Pars minima et orationis fragmentum [the smallest part and fragment of a sentence]; this is the translation which *Schrevelius*, in his *Lexicon*, gives of the Greek word *COMMA*, and this is the source from which the present Essay has taken its rise. Meeting accidentally with the above passage, upon it I founded a paper, which I read to some of my fellow-members of the Banbury Mechanics' Institute :—afterwards, when others of us volunteered to give a series of lectures, fortnightly, during a winter season, I chose Punctuation as my theme.

My attention thus drawn to the subject, I have not, in my reading, passed unnoticed whatever occurred bearing on the subject; and further, I have searched out every work which my time and my abode, could place within my reach, at all likely to help me to a just conclusion.

If any one thinks that, in so small a work, I have been too profuse in my quotations or citations of authorities, let him remember that I have studied in a profession in which it is the pride of its writers to bring forward auth-

orities and precedents for what they say ; in the assurance that, while they thereby add authority to their works, they do not diminish their own reputations either as lawyers or men of general learning. For myself, I add, that while I am proud to bring forward the authority of eminent Rhetoricians and Grammarians for much which I have asserted, I have not shrunk from citing any one, because what he has published may be brought to bear against a single proposition in the Essay, original or derivative. Besides, if any of the learned should honour my work with a consideration, the quotations and citations may afford them some small help in forming an opinion on the subject, or if they shall be minded to refer to the originals, may serve them as an index.

While for the loan of books and assistance in other ways, I confess myself indebted to many men, I cannot refrain mentioning by name my friend William Bigg of Banbury, who, having read my work in manuscript, and the proof sheets before passing through the press, has suggested many additions and omissions, which I have felt it right to adopt.

NEITHEROF, BANBURY, October, 1842.

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AN ESSAY ON PUNCTUATION.

POINTING or PUNCTUATION is the art of placing, in a written or printed work, certain points, marks, notes, or signs; whereby the author hopes to make his sentences more easily to be understood by *his* readers and *their* hearers; and consequently more correctly to convey his ideas to them. Perhaps there is no department in literature, so generally attempted to be practised, and so generally presumed to be of utility, of which so little knowledge is to be acquired from books, ancient or modern, as Punctuation.

It is proposed to treat the subject in four sections;—
1st, the practice of the art of Punctuation before the invention of the art of printing;
2ndly, Its history in the early stages of the art of printing and its progress to the present time;
3rdly, The period, colon, semi-colon, comma, parenthe-

sis, and interrogation, and their several points; also of the interjection and its note, sometimes called the note of admiration, and the point or mark first called the break and now the dash;

4thly, The general conclusion.

Before entering on the first section of this essay, one of the principal propositions intended to be maintained, will be stated; it is this, that the several parts of a composition are not formed by the points, which commonly bear the names of periods, colons, semi-colons, commas, parentheses, and interrogations; the office of these points being only to point out to the eye of the reader, the periods and members and fragments, whose names they bear. The distinction between periods, members, and fragments, and their points is not a new one: Gerard J. Vossius says, that Grammarians look to periods, colons, and commas, as the means of *good* pointing; but Rhetoricians, in order to render their compositions pleasing and perspicuous.¹ In the article Punctuation, in the Introduction to English Grammar, Bishop Lowth drew the distinction between periods, members, and fragments, and their points, as follows;—

“The several degrees of Connexion between Sentences, and between their principal constructive parts, Rhetoricians have considered under the following distinctions, as the most obvious and remarkable: the Period, Colon, Semicolon, and Comma.

“The Period is the whole Sentence, complete in itself, wanting nothing to make a full and perfect sense, and not connected in construction with a subsequent Sentence.

“The Colon, or Member, is a chief constructive part, or greater division, of a Sentence. The Semicolon, or

Half-member, is a less constructive part, or subdivision, of a Sentence or Member.

"A Sentence or Member is again subdivided into Commas, or Segments; which are the least constructive parts of a Sentence or Member, in this way of considering it; for the next subdivision would be the resolution of it into Phrases and Words.

"The Grammarians have followed this division of the Rhetoricians, and have appropriated to each of these distinctions its mark, or Point; which takes its name from the part of the Sentence, which it is employed to distinguish; as follows;—The Period [.]; the Colon [:]; the Semicolon [;]; and the Comma [,]." Campbell is another authority for the distinction between periods, members, and fragments, and their points: in his *Philosophy of Rhetoric* he quotes, for another purpose, the following sentence; "For as, if any of those had then been condemned, you would not now have transgressed; so if you should now be condemned, others will not hereafter transgress;" but he adds; "the sentence is a perfect period, consisting of two members, each of which is subdivided into two clauses."³

SECTION THE FIRST.

The History of Pointing before the invention of the Art of Printing.

To the Grecian writers of the highest antiquity, points were unknown; but nevertheless, that a complex period was considered by them, to be divided into several members, is an undisputed fact.

When points were first invented is not a settled question: the full point is found in inscriptions, of a date four hundred years before the Christian era; and is said to have been inserted in manuscripts of the Scriptures, as early as the fourth century; certainly it is to be found in those of the seventh.

The learned German, Augustus Matthæi, in his Greek Grammar, says, that it was not until the great influx of strangers to Alexandria, had impaired the purity of the Greek language, that the art of pointing became an object with the learned. Matthæi further states that Aristophanes of Byzantium, the Grammarian, who was born about the year 240, invented three marks, by which to distinguish the divisions of a discourse:—upon the authority of the Port Royal Latin Grammar, and from what is further stated by Matthæi, it appears that his statement, that there were three marks is too large: in fact there was only one mark, a *point*, serving three different offices; each office being distinguished by the situation of the point;—for instance, if the position of the point was over the last letter of a word, it performed the part of our full-point, and denoted the end of a period or complete close of the sentence;—if placed in or at the middle of a letter, it served for our colon-point, perhaps also for our semi-colon-point, and denoted that the proposition was only partly finished, that another member, beginning with a pronoun or conjunction was necessary or about to be added, and from its position it was by the Latins termed *medja distinctio*;—if placed at the bottom of the last letter of a word, from its position it was by the Latins called *subdistinctio*, and denoted that the sense was altogether incomplete or suspended. Afterwards, when pointing came into more

general use, to denote a period, the point was removed from the top to the bottom of the word,—to denote a colon, the point bearing the form of our colon-point was adopted,—and a point, bearing somewhat of the form of the comma-point, was used to denote a comma;—these last three points are found in some of the oldest manuscripts now extant. Grammarians do not all agree upon the uses of a single point, in the manner above set forth :—Gaza says, and Vergara was of the same opinion, that if the ancients put the point to the middle of the last letter, it made their complete sentence ; and if they put it to the top, it was their middle sentence ; that is their colon :—Vossius, in his small grammar, also gives a different version of the matter ; saying, that the point at the middle of the final letter signified the comma ;—at the top it was the colon ;—and at the bottom the period ; but herein the author of the Port Royal Latin Grammar seems to think Vossius was mistaken.⁴ In manuscripts of the ninth century, a note of interrogation, bearing somewhat of the form of our semi-colon-point, was added.

The Greek, in which the New Testament was first written, was not pure Greek, such as was written by Plato, Aristotle, and other eminent Greek authors ; but it was interspersed with many peculiarities, belonging to the Hebrew, Chaldee, and Syriac Tongues : the Hebrew or Chaldee and Syriac being, at the earliest age of Christianity, spoken in common by the Jews of Palestine. Many biblical critics have contended, that points were in use before the time of the Apostles : on the other hand, as many others contend, that their use did not come in until after that time :—whether points were used or not in the manuscripts of the Scriptures, the

doubts of the Fathers of the Church, how particular passages should be read and understood, gives reason to believe that there was not, in the fourth century, an accustomed system of pointing; it is known, that in that century the Septuagint was not pointed, and thence, it may be inferred, that the New Testament was in a like case.

Saint Jerome, who was born A. D. 340, and died at the age of 80, translated the Books of the Old and New Testaments into Latin; which version is known by the name of the Vulgate:—he, it is said, attended to the pointing of the Scriptures, and to him is attributed the merit of adding, perhaps adopting from some of the Greek Grammarians, the comma-point or *subdistinctio* and the colon-point or *media distinctio*. About the time of Jerome, points began to be used in manuscripts; but it does not appear, that any thing approaching to the present system, was adopted earlier than the ninth century.

Notwithstanding the claim for Jerome, that he attended to the pointing of the Scriptures, a more consistent tale of the first step taken towards this end, is as follows; that in the fifth century, to assist the clergy in reading the New Testament in public worship, and to obviate the inconveniences and mistakes, to which the earlier fathers had been subject, Euthalius, first a Deacon of the church at Alexandria, and afterwards Bishop of Sulca in Egypt, divided the text of the New Testament into lines; and in such a way that each line terminated, where a pause was to be made: the following, taken from the epistle of St. Paul to Titus, is an example of this mode of pointing;

THAT THE AGED MEN BE SOBER
 GRAVE
 TEMPERATE
 SOUND IN FAITH
 IN LOVE
 THE AGED WOMEN LIKEWISE
 IN BEHAVIOUR AS BECOME THE HOLINESS
 NOT FALSE ACCUSERS
 NOT GIVENTOMUCH WINE
 TEACHERS OF GOOD THINGS⁵

An examination of the above passage, so divided into lines, and the consideration that, from various causes, after-copyists might write several divisions in the same line, suggest the idea, that in such a case they adopted some mark, to distinguish the several divisions; hence might arise the introduction of at least one point.⁶

Aristotle treated of the period, not as a sign but as a reality.⁷ Cicero also treated of the period, not as a sign but as a reality:⁸ he also spoke of the colon as a member of a sentence, and of a comma as a fragment, under the name of *incisum*.⁹ Quintilian treated the period, colon, and *incisum* or comma as realities, and not as points.¹⁰

Cicero spoke of pointing [*interpungendi*]; and it has been said that he intended thereby to speak of certain marks, used to distinguish one word from another; but an examination of what he says in his work entitled, "De Claris Oratoribus," leads to the inference, that by pointing, he meant certain signs or points, which were used to distinguish the numbers, feet, or measures, in which studied oratorical compositions were framed for the sake of harmony, and that he did not intend any

points, used to mark or to point out periods, colons, or commas *as such*; if this opinion is correct, the points of Cicero would answer to the marks or bars, which denote the rests and measures in modern written music.^{11 12}

Seneca said, that when he wrote he was accustomed to interpoint:¹³ but quoting him on the authority of Ainsworth, I do not now venture an opinion as to what he intended by that phrase.

There certainly is a great difference between the use of marks for distinguishing word from word, or distinguishing rests and measures, and the use of points for pointing out the several members and fragments of a period: in inscriptions (fac simile copies of which are given in the Gentleman's Magazine, for February, 1841) on Roman Altars, found in Britain, are certain marks, evidently points, and used for other purposes, than merely to distinguish word from word.

Beyond what Cicero, Quintilian, and Seneca have said,—the inscriptions on the altars,—that St. Jerome was a Roman and attended to the pointing of the Vulgate edition of the Scriptures,—and what is stated by comparatively modern Grammarians, I have, in relation to the Art of Pointing, learned nothing of the practice of ancient Latin Authors: it may however be reasonably inferred, that if they did not in any way lead, they perhaps followed the Grecian Grammarians.

This brief account of the Art of Pointing in ancient times, is far from being satisfactory; some of the dates and statements are not, apparently, reconcileable with each other; and an examination of ancient manuscripts by some scholar would, perhaps, lead to a version different in many particulars.

SECTION THE SECOND.

The History of the Art of Pointing in the earlier stages of the Art of Printing, and its progress to its present state.

In the earliest printed works, which have come under my notice, only the period-point and the colon-point were made use of; but the interrogative-point was soon added.

Whoever introduced the several points, it seems that a *full-point*, a point called *come*, answering to our colon-point, a point called *virgil* answering to our comma-point, the *parenthesis-points* and *interrogative-point*, were used at the close of the fourteenth, or beginning of the fifteenth century. In a work entitled *Typographia* or the *Printer's Instructor*, by J. Johnson, printer, published in 1824, reference is made to a printed book, which is, probably on insufficient grounds, attributed to Wynkyn de Worde: from this latter work, so attributed to De Worde, the following extract upon the *craft of poynting* thus speaks;—"there be five manner of points and divisions most used among cunning men; the which if they be well used, make the sentence very light and easy to be understood, both to the reader and hearer: and they be these, virgil,—come,—parenthesis,—plain point,—interrogative." The extract then goes on;—"seeing we (as we would to God every preacher would do) have kept our rules, both in English and Latin, what need we, seeing our own be sufficient, to put any other examples." The quotation proceeds to describe the form and explain the several offices of the five points:—the virgil is thus described; "it is a slend-

er stroke leaning forward, betokening a little short rest, without any perfectness yet of sentence": this description of a virgil makes it answer to our comma-point, and the French Grammarians yet retain the name; the comma-point being by them named *virgule*.—of the come the quotation thus speaks;—"a come is with two titles betokening a longer rest, and the sentence is yet unperfect, or else if it be perfect, there cometh more after belonging to it; the which more cannot be perfect by itself, without at the least somewhat of it that goeth afore"; this description of the *come* makes it answer nearly to our colon and semi-colon-points, and it will be referred to, when the colon and its point are treated upon.¹⁴

The first notice, which I have taken of the *semi-colon-point* is in a work, printed in 1605.

Of the *note of exclamation* the first I find printed, was in 1618.

The earliest use of the *dash*, that I have seen, was in the year 1662: it was then named the break, and served to denote an interruption, or an abrupt breaking off, in the midst of a period; subsequently it has been diverted from its primary use, and by some writers made to serve, without distinction, for the colon, semi-colon, and comma points, and even the parenthesis-points.

In the middle of the last century, I find a point distinct from the parenthesis-point, to which was given the name of *parathesis*; the form of which is commonly called brackets; the fragment which it points out will hereafter be treated of.

The summary of the matter appears to me to be, that at the introduction of printing about 1445, only two

points, answering to our full-point and colon-point, were used,—that within half a century from that time, the comma, parenthesis, and interrogative points, were added,—that before the year 1660, all the points now in use, except the dash and parathesis, had become not uncommon,—that the dash under the name of break was then coming into use,—and that even now the parathesis is seldom used, and under that name is hardly known.

I come also to this conclusion, yet without speaking very confidently, that in the earlier ages of printing, something like a system of pointing was observed;¹⁵ but that for the past two centuries, there are not two authors to be found, who have observed the same system, and perhaps not one author, even in the same work, who is consistent throughout.

I also judge that in a great number, perhaps the greater number, of works printed during the past two centuries, the practice has been to leave the pointing mainly to the printer.

And I will conclude this section by saying, that I believe the historical part of it to be correct, as far as it goes,—that additions may yet be made to it,—and that although my opinions have been formed only on a part of the evidence, I have every reason to believe that *that* part is a fair sample of the whole.

SECTION THE THIRD.

Of periods, colons, semi-colons, commas, parentheses, paratheses, and interrogations, and their points; also of the interjection and its point, sometimes called the note of admiration, and the point or mark first called the break and now the dash.

In this essay periods, colons, semi-colons, commas, interrogatives, parentheses, and paratheses, are carefully spoken of as being things distinct from full-points, colon-points, semi-colon-points, comma-points, interrogative-points or notes of interrogation, parenthesis-points, and parathesis-points: it will be contended that the period, colon, semi-colon, comma, interrogation, parenthesis, and parathesis are realities, and that the points, which in common parlance, bear those names are merely notes, marks, or signs; their several offices being *only* to point out where the realities, of which they are the indices, exist: to the authorities of Vossius, Lowth, and Campbell, before given on this head, that of the authors of the Port Royal Latin Grammar may be added; in it, under the head of Punctuation, the period, colon, and comma, are treated as realities.

It is not to be expected that every one, into whose hands this essay may fall, will understand the distinction between the *primary* and *secondary* meanings of a word; and as the present essay cannot be fairly understood by any, who do not understand such a distinction, a definition or rather an illustration of it, shall be attempted. The *primary* meaning of a word is *that* very idea, and *that* idea alone, which, upon the first use of the word, was intended to be by it conveyed to

the mind of a hearer or reader:—the word *lion*, in its primary signification, means a well known animal; but it has several secondary meanings: sometimes a brave man is called a lion; sometimes lion-hearted: by way of derision a cowardly fellow is sometimes called a lion: the lions at the Tower of London were once considered wonderful sights; thence, in a secondary meaning, any thing in a place, animate or inanimate, worthy of a sight is termed one of the lions of the place:—the word *ear*, in its primary signification is the name of the outward organ of hearing, but in a secondary sense it means the attention of the mind;—

Give ear, O Israel!

The mode of using a word in a secondary sense is called by Rhetoricians a *trope*.¹⁶

In many instances it has happened that the primary meaning of the word is altogether abandoned, forgotten, or become obsolete, and the word is never used but in a secondary meaning:—this is the case, in the English language, with the words colon, semi-colon, and comma; in the place of their signifying members or fragments of a period, they only raise in the minds of many men the ideas of certain points or marks; hence error and confusion have arisen, and hence the source of some of the difficulties of pointing! It may be thought that the distinction, between the members and fragments of a period and their signs or points, is dwelt upon to satiety; but, it is the ground-work of the system: the *sign* of a reality can never be *the* reality; as an hieroglyphic of the sun cannot be the sun, nor the letters SUN, that luminary; so a *full-point* is not a *period*, or a *comma-point* a *comma*.

Whenever the words period, colon, semi-colon, comma,

interrogative, parenthesis, and parathesis, are used in this work, they will be used in their several primary, and not in their secondary meanings.

THE PERIOD.

Periods, colons, and semi-colons, have so intimate a relation to each other, that in English composition, what is one and what is another, cannot be well understood, until what is said of all has been gone through.

“With respect to *Periods*, it would be neither practically useful, nor even suitable to the present object, to enter into an examination of the different senses in which various authors have employed the word. A technical term may allowably be employed, in a scientific work, in any sense not very remote from common usage, (especially when common usage is not uniform and invariable, in the meaning affixed to it,) provided it be clearly defined, and the definition strictly adhered to. By a Period, then, is to be understood in this place, any sentence, whether simple or complex, which is so framed that the Grammatical construction will not admit of a close, before the end of it; in which, in short, the meaning remains suspended, as it were, till the whole is finished.”¹⁷ The foregoing quotation is from Archbishop Whateley’s *Elements of Rhetoric*, and the liberty he there allows, will in this work be taken with the period: although it has been the usage with Grammarians and Rhetoricians, only to consider *that* a period, which consists of two or more members, a sentence of only one member will be regarded as a period in English composition; this

liberty is the rather taken, because Vossius allows that a period may be monoclonic, or consist only of one member.¹⁸ The words sentence and period are also treated in this work as being synonymous.¹⁹

Dr. Valpy in his *Elegantia Latinæ* defines a period and gives instructions for its formation; of his chapter upon its structure, great use will be made.²⁰

The word period is derived from the Greek; the Greek word being rendered, a period or perfect sentence, a circuit, a comprisal, a joining without interruption, a cycle, a return or revolution as that of a planet.²¹

The point denoting a sentence or period and that it has reached its close, is sometimes called a full-point, sometimes a full-stop, and sometimes a period.

The period, in English composition, may be thus described;—*its beginning and end are divided by one or more words; and although the beginning and the end are so divided, they are yet so connected, or have such a mutual dependence, that a reader or hearer, as he reads or listens, is aware, because he has not found those things expressed, which preceding words have led him to expect, that he has not arrived at the end.*

A period is never perfect, when the mind of the reader or the hearer is brought to a rest at any part, before the period is actually ended.

Lucius Mummius destroyed Corinth.

This is an example of a period of only one member: the mind cannot rest at either of the words *Mummius* or *destroyed*, without perceiving that the sense is not complete.

Lucius Mummius, because he was ignorant, destroyed Corinth.

This is an example of a period with one fragment or

comma;—the words, *because he was ignorant*, form a fragment, and this fragment by itself would convey no meaning;—stop at the word *ignorant*, the mind makes not a rest, it looks for something more.

Lucius Mummius, because he was ignorant and illiterate, destroyed Corinth.

The words *and illiterate* form another fragment.

If as much, as Alexander excelled other commanders in warlike bravery, he had surpassed them in the virtue of temperance, he would not more have commanded the veneration of posterity, than he did the love, the respect, and the subjection of his people.

In this period, the mind having been prepared by the initiative phrase, *if as much*, to expect something more, it cannot come to a satisfied rest, until the word *people* has been attained.

The truth or beauty of a thing is sometimes better understood, nay even discovered, by contrast; therefore to make this matter of the period yet clearer, the difference between a perfect period and a loose period shall be set forth.

Lucius Mummius destroyed Corinth, because he was ignorant and illiterate.

This is a loose period; for when we have read or heard the word *Corinth*, the proposition is apparently complete; the mind is satisfied; there is not one preceding word, which intimates that the period was not finished, and before it can be proceeded with, the mind has to take up the subject a second time. Dr. Whateley, now Archbishop of Dublin, in his work on rhetoric, describes a loose sentence, as follows;—"a loose sentence is any, whose construction will allow of a stop, so as to form a perfect sentence at one or more places, before we

arrive at the end": he gives the following example of a very loose sentence;—²²

We came to our journey's end, at last, with no small difficulty, after much fatigue, through deep roads, and bad weather.

In this example there are no less than five commas or fragments; at the end of any one of which the sentence might have terminated,—have satisfied the mind,—and yet have been grammatically correct. Loose sentences fatigue the mind: in one of them it once, twice, or thrice, comes to a rest; but behold! without any previous notice, again has it to take up the subject; and in a very loose sentence, over and over again. Now the quotation last before given, only wants a different arrangement of its commas or fragments (the very same words only being used) to make pleasant to the ear and mind that, which was before tiresome:

At last, after much fatigue, through deep roads, and in bad weather, we came, with no small difficulty to our journey's end.

In this form, stop where you will, until you have reached the end, the sense is not complete and the mind cannot be satisfied.²³

In stating what a period ought to be, there is no intention of asserting or recommending, that compositions in English should be framed only in exact periods; the nature of our language, to some extent, forbids this: to write in periods was much easier in Greek and Latin than it is in English. On this head I cannot do better than give at length, a part of what Dr. Whateley says;—"Periods, or sentences nearly approaching to Periods, have certainly, when other things are equal, the advantage in point of Energy. An unexpected continuation of a sentence which the reader had supposed to be con-

the relative pronouns, as partaking of the nature of conjunction. It is by these parts, less significant in themselves, that the more significant parts, particularly the members of complex sentences, are knit together. The frequent recurrence, therefore, of such feeble supplements, cannot fail to prove tiresome, especially in pieces wherein an enlivened and animated diction might naturally be expected. But no where hath simplicity in the expression a better effect in invigorating the sentiments, than in poetical description on interesting subjects. Consider the song composed by Moses, on occasion of the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea, and you will find, that part of the effect produced by that noble hymn is justly imputable to the simple, the abrupt, the rapid manner adopted in the composition. I shall produce only two verses for a specimen. "The enemy said, I will pursue; I will overtake; I will divide the spoil; my revenge shall be satiated upon them: I will draw my sword; my hand shall destroy them; thou blewest with thy breath; the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters." This is the figure which the Greek rhetoricians call *asyndeton*,²⁶ and to which they ascribe a wonderful efficacy. It ought to be observed that the natural connexion of the particulars mentioned is both close and manifest; and it is this consideration which entirely supersedes the artificial signs of that connexion, such as conjunctions and relatives. Our translators (who, it must be acknowledged, are not often chargeable with this fault) have injured one passage in endeavouring to mend it. Literally rendered it stands thus: "Thou sentest forth thy wrath: it consumed them as stubble." These two simple sentences have appeared to them too much de-

tached. For this reason, they have injudiciously combined them into one complex sentence, by inserting the relative *which*, and thereby weakened the expression : "Thou sentest forth thy wrath, which consumed them as stubble." They have also thought fit sometimes to add the conjunction *and* when it was not necessary, and might well have been spared.

"If any one perceives not the difference, and consequently, is not satisfied of the truth of this doctrine, let him make the following experiment on the song now under review. Let him transcribe it by himself, carefully inserting conjunctions and relatives, in every place which will admit them in a consistency with the sense, and then let him try the effect of the whole. If, after all, he is not convinced, I know no argument in nature that can weigh with him. For this is one of those cases in which the decision of every man's own taste must be final with regard to himself."²⁷

Although there has not been any intention in this essay, of trenching on the office of a rhetorician, any further than is necessary to elucidate the punctuation of sentences, it is suggested that in the formation of a sentence, the use of pronouns and other words of reference to other sentences, should as much as possible be avoided.

Perhaps to the arrangement or misarrangement of the members and fragments of periods and sentences, is it to be attributed, that we are pleased with some public speakers, and displeased with others :—two preachers shall have the very same ideas upon the very same subject, shall both use much the same words upon the same subject, and both shall actually convey their ideas to the minds of their hearers ; now one pleases us

because speaking in well-framed sentences and periods, he does not distress our minds; while the other displeases us because he deals in loose sentences, and is therefore tiresome.

To follow Grammarians and Rhetoricians in all that they have said as to the several varieties of the period, and of the feet and measures of which periods ought to consist, and with which they ought to conclude, in order to make them harmonious, is too foreign to the particular subject of this essay, and will not be further attempted.

THE COLON AND SEMI-COLON.

FIRST, MORE PARTICULARLY AS REGARDS THE COLON.

Colon is a Greek word, which is variously translated; a limb; a member, as a foot or leg; a part of a building; a member of a sentence.²⁸

The ancient author before referred to, describes the colon and semi-colon under the name of *come*: "the sentence," he says, "either is yet unperfect, or else if it be perfect, there cometh more after it belonging to it; the which more cannot be perfect by itself without, at the least, somewhat of it which goeth before."

In the preface to an English dictionary (published anonymously) the colon is described as follows;—"the colon is used when that which precedes it, is complete, but is followed by something illustrative": to illustrate his position the author gives the following example;—"In misfortunes we often mistake dejection for constancy: we bear them without daring to look on them; as cowards suffer themselves to be killed without resist-

ance":—commenting on the passage he adds;—"the connective *as* in the latter division, makes a semi-colon more proper than a colon before it"; this author confounds colons and semi-colons with the colon and semi-colon points.

Nature confesseth some atonement to be necessary : the Gospel discovers that the atonement is made.

In this quotation the first member, "*Nature confesseth some atonement to be necessary, is by itself* a simple period: the second member, "*the Gospel discovers that the atonement is made,*" is also *by itself* a simple period; this second member is *the more which cometh after*, which relatively is not perfect of itself, without somewhat of that which went before;—singly, they are sentences, or periods; in connection they become colons, and form only one period.

The Definition of colons in English composition may be set out as follows;—*when a simple period has in it, no words leading the reader to expect another member, and another simple period, illustrative of the first, and used for that illustration alone, does immediately follow, the two periods severally become colons and form a sentence.* In a discourse, in which the subject-matter is closely kept to, it would be difficult, perhaps impossible, to find a sentence, simple or complex, which does not throw some light or have some relation to another sentence; but it does not thence follow that such a sentence is a colon; to become such, it must be used to *illustrate* an immediately preceding member, and for that purpose alone. The word *immediately* in the preceding sentence, is not intended to have the force of excluding the use of more than one colon in a sentence.

In the formation of colons, pronouns representing

nouns of the period or member to be illustrated, are frequently and must sometimes be necessarily used: thence it follows, that every colon may be reduced to the form of a simple or monocolonic period, by converting its pronouns into the nouns they severally represent, and by repeating or supplying any word, which is not expressed, but only understood.

One criterion of a colon is, that it always has its own verb expressed or understood.²⁹

Example of a sentence of three members;—

Geology has claims upon the regard of all cultivated and pious minds: it leads us to study *that*, which God has made our earthly abode, in its present state, filled with monuments of past conditions, and presages, I venture to think, of the future: it leads us into some acquaintance with a magnificent part of Jehovah's will, according to which he worketh all things.

The following is an example of a sentence consisting of five members, in the form of a climax;—

We can do nothing well till we act with one accord: we can have no accord in action till we agree together in heart: we cannot agree without a supernatural influence: we cannot have a supernatural influence unless we pray for it: we cannot pray acceptably without repentance and confession.

A mistake pointed out, sometimes teaches as much as a perfect work: the printer of William Cobbett's English Grammar, in the very sentence in which Cobbett professes to shew what a colon is, has placed a full-point, where a colon-point ought to have been inserted: this may be seen in the following extract;—"The colon which is written thus (:) is next to the full-point in requiring a complete sense to the words. It is indeed often used when the sense is complete, and there is something still behind, which tends to make the sense fuller or clearer:" now Mr. Cobbett's second period is a member, which tends to make the sense of the

former fuller or clearer; therefore, according to Mr. Cobbett's own rule, it ought to have been divided from the former by a colon-point, or at least a semi-colon-point, and not by a full-point.

MORE PARTICULARLY OF THE SEMI-COLON.

The semi-colon of English composition is only a variety of the colon: like that it has its own verb expressed or understood:—the distinction between them may be drawn as follows;—the colon takes more nearly than the semi-colon the form of a period, and words of reference are more frequently used in the semi-colon, than in the colon.

The semi-colon appears in two forms: the first is this; *if one member contains a word or words, which lead the reader to expect another member, and another member, having a word or words of reference to the former does immediately follow, the latter member is a semi-colon.*

The second form is, *when one member is followed by another, and the latter means nothing or effects nothing, without calling in aid the preceding member, then the latter member is a semi-colon.*

An example of the semi-colon in the first form will now follow;—

As the desire of approbation, when it works according to reason, improves a man in everything that is laudable; so nothing is more destructive to him, when he is governed by vanity and folly.

Examples of the semi-colon in the second form;—

Under the general head of conversation for the improvement of the mind, we may rank the practice of disputing; that is, when two or more persons appear to have different sentiments, and maintain their own, or oppose the other's opinion, in alternate discourse, by some methods of argument.

Disputes may sometimes be successful to search out truth,—sometimes effectual to maintain truth and convince the mistaken; but at other times a dispute is a mere scene of battle, in order to victory and vain triumph.

The same rule applies to semi-colons that has been applied to colons; viz., *they must be used to illustrate a preceding member, and for that purpose only.*

From what has been just set forth, it appears, that when in English composition many members, having *immediate* relation to each other, meet together, and every one but the first is used to illustrate a preceding member, they form a piece of workmanship which is sometimes called a period, and more frequently a sentence, and its close is marked with a full-point.

If the theory now propounded be correct, discourses do not consist of so many sentences or periods, as has been generally conjectured: in the preface to Pope's Works is to be found a passage, printed and pointed as follows;—

I confess, it was want of consideration that made me an author. I writ, because it amused me. I corrected, because it was as pleasant to me to correct as to write. I published, because I was told I might please such as it was a credit to please.

Now it is submitted that the pointing of this passage should be as follows;—

I confess, it was want of consideration that made me an author: I writ, because it amused me: I corrected, because it was as pleasant to me to correct as to write: I published, because I was told I might please such as it was a credit to please.

Again;—

The work is unique as a specimen of typography. Nothing more exquisite has met our eye since the days of Foulis or Elzevir. The maps too, are at once correct and beautiful. In modern times there has not appeared any other Bible, that can bear the slightest comparison with it.

It is submitted that this should stand;—

The work is unique as a specimen of typography: nothing more exquisite has met our eye since the days of Foulis or Elzevir: the maps too, are at once correct and beautiful: in modern times there has not appeared any other Bible, that can bear the slightest comparison with it.

The celebrated dispatch of Cæsar to the Roman Senate is a sentence of three colons; not three simple periods as it is sometimes pointed :

I came : I saw : I conquered.

I came. I saw. I conquered.

It may be objected that the system now propounded, will lead to periods of inconvenient lengths; but if the rule, *that only members used for the purpose of illustrating a preceding member, and for that purpose only, are colons and semi-colons*, be kept, the perpetration of a period to an inconvenient length will be of rare occurrence.

The perpetration of a sentence of inconvenient length, arising from its being formed of many members, may be avoided by repeating the principal member, and giving on each repetition, only one or some of the subordinate members. From a consideration of what has been said on the period, colon, and semi-colon, it follows, that a complex sentence consists of one principal member and one or more subordinate members; such subordinate members being used only for the purpose of illustrating the principal member. The main proposition of a sentence is contained in the principal member. To illustrate a proposition, it is sometimes necessary to use two or more members of great length, or many subordinate members: in such a case to avoid a sentence of inconvenient length, the proposition should be repeated, and the illustrative members divided among the several repetitions:—for instance, the three sentences or periods, included between the fourteenth line of the second, and the twenty-third line of the third pages of this work, have the same proposition; viz., that the distinction between periods and members and their points, is not a new one: now these three periods or sentences might be framed as one;

what is there said of Lowth and Campbell and the quotations from their works, might be added as illustrative members (colons) and marked with colon-points; but such a sentence would be found of inconvenient length and not readily intelligible; therefore the proposition is three times repeated, and to each repetition different illustrative members have been added.

The practice of marking colons with full points, leads to an inconvenience similar to that spoken of in note 6, in regard to modern versions of the Scriptures being divided into verses; viz., by this practice many passages are looked upon as distinct, when they ought to be considered as united; consequently the interpretation is likely to be injured.

Periods, colons, and semi-colons, having been debated at great length, what is a colon or semi-colon will be summed up in a general description:—a colon or semi-colon is *the more which cometh after*, used only to illustrate what goeth immediately before; the *more which cometh after* and *that which goeth before* forming a period.³⁰

THE COMMA.

In treating of the colon the object was to shew, that it is a member of a sentence; but it is not so with the comma: *a comma* is only a fragment of a sentence.

Comma is a Greek word which is variously translated;—segment; fragment; a slice; a piece cut off or cut out; part of a period; a short division of a period; a part of a member in a sentence; the smallest part or fragment of a sentence; a mark; a sign; the smallest part in

music.³¹ Cicero says, what the Greeks called *commas* and *colons*, the Latins incorrectly termed *incisa* and *membra*.³²

A comma may be thus defined;—*it is a fragment, consisting of one or more words, conveying by itself no intelligible idea to the mind, and generally may be removed from a sentence and the sentence remain sense.* The use of a comma is to qualify other words and phrases of the sentence, of which it is a fragment.

Vossius says, that with the ancient rhetoricians the comma was accounted an imperfect sentence, or a part of a period composed *without* a verb :³³ if, in English composition, a rule can be laid down that a comma has not its verb, to such a rule there must be some exceptions.

As a further help to the student some rules upon the *comma*, mainly framed from what Bishop Lowth says upon the comma, and what Lindley Murray says upon the *comma-point*, shall be given.

Two or more nouns occurring in the same construction, are severally commas and are usually pointed ; as,

Reason, virtue, answer one great aim.

The husband, wife, and children, suffered extremely.

Two or more adjectives belonging to the same substantive, are likewise commas and are usually pointed ; as,

Plain, honest truth.

David was brave, wise, and pious.

The most innocent pleasures are the sweetest, the most rational, the most affecting, and the most lasting.

Two or more verbs, having the same nominative case, are commas and are usually pointed ; as,

Virtue supports in adversity, moderates in prosperity.

We may advise, exhort, comfort, request, and discuss.

Participles are subject to a like rule; as,

A man fearing, serving, and loving his creator.

And so are adverbs; as,

We are fearfully, wonderfully made.

Success depends on acting prudently, steadily, and vigorously, in what we undertake.

To the above rules there are exceptions: if two nouns, or two adjectives, or two verbs, or two participles, or two adverbs, are connected by a conjunction, it is not usual to point them; as,

Virtue and vice form a strong contrast to each other.

Libertines call religion bigotry or superstition.

True worth is modest and retired.

The study of natural history expands and elevates the mind.

Whether we eat or drink, labour or sleep, we should be moderate.

By being admired and flattered we are often corrupted.

Some men act deliberately and presumptuously.

To the exceptive rule, last above given, an exception may be made, which is this; that when commas of many words are connected by a conjunction, they are not uncommonly pointed; as,

Intemperance destroys the strength of our bodies, and the vigour of our minds.

The case absolute is a comma and is often pointed; as,

His father dying, he succeeded to the estate.

Commas, which begin with a relative pronoun, are commonly pointed; as,

He preaches sublimely, who leads a sober, righteous, and pious life.

Adjuncts to a nominative case are commas, oftentimes marked with only one comma-point, placed immediately before the verb ; as,

The good taste of the present age, has not allowed us to neglect the cultivation of the English Tongue.

In this example, the words *of the present age* are the adjuncts which form the comma, which is marked with only one comma-point.

A comma may be treated in three different ways :—

1st, It may be distinguished from the other words, with two comma-points, as in the following example ;—

Lucius Mummius, because he was ignorant, destroyed Corinth.

2ndly, It may be marked with only one comma-point ; thus,

Lucius Mummius because he was ignorant, destroyed Corinth.

3dly, The points may altogether be omitted ; as,

Lucius Mummius because he was ignorant destroyed Corinth.

High pointing is an error : it is from the extravagant use of the comma-points, that the phrase has arisen ; for instance the following period is high-pointed ;—

Lucius Mummius, because he was ignorant, and illiterate, destroyed Corinth.

The general and perhaps the better way of pointing such a period would be thus ;—

Lucius Mummius, because he was ignorant and illiterate, destroyed Corinth.

The following is another instance of high pointing ;—

At dinner parties, a custom, particularly of late years, has grown up, of drinking the healths of, comparatively, obscure men, who are present, and, at public meetings, there is an analogous custom of thanking men, for supposed, or trifling services :—these health-drinkings, and thanks-votings, the cheering, the cries of hear, hear, and the

clapping of hands, which accompany them, instead of adding to the honors and reputations, of some men, frequently make them, what is, indeed, sometimes, intended, by their companions, objects of fun: for folks call, upon them, for speeches, and replies, and the necessity, as some fancy, of saying something, the perplexity of not knowing what to say, and the anxiety of appearing learned, deep-read, or witty, are circumstances, which are capable of making, and have made, many a man, appear ridiculous: besides, these customs, are evil customs, because they, sometimes, give a blockhead, of many words, and little sense,

One, who strikes his breast, and slaps his thighs,
As, if he's stung, by gnats, or flies,

with superficial listeners, particularly those of the fair sex, an advantage over men, of undoubted ability, to which these talking chaps, are not, justly, entitled.

The error of *high pointing* may be avoided by omitting to point some commas, or by pointing others only at one extremity: in short periods, which are so plain in themselves, that the several parts require no distinctive marks, confusion rather than perspicuity is produced, by the introduction of comma-points: confusion rather than perspicuity, is also produced in long sentences, where comma-points are unnecessarily thrust in. The difficulty with commas is not as to what is or what is not a comma, but whether they shall be marked at all, or only with one or two points.³⁴

THE PARENTHESIS AND PARATHESIS.

MORE PARTICULARLY OF THE PARENTHESIS.

Parenthesis is taken from the Greek and signifies interposition.³⁵ The Parenthesis is placed by Grammarians, as one of the five species of the figure of speech called Hyperbaton; ³⁶ the following is by some of them given as an example;—

Tityre, dum redeo (brevis est via) pasce capellas.

Translated the passage runs,

Oh Tityrus, until I return (the journey is but a short one) feed the goats.

A parenthesis is a note and ought only to be inserted in a sentence, when from its brevity, it does not distract the mind of the reader too long from the main proposition. Kett, in his *Elements of General Literature*, observes, that "the long parenthesis which so frequently occurs in the older [English] writers to the great embarrassment and perplexity of their meaning, has fallen much into disuse; and," he adds, "that it is no where to be found in the writings of Johnson."³⁷

Not unfrequently but improperly, two comma-points are substituted for the parenthesis-points:—there may be parts of a sentence which partake partly of the nature of a comma, and partly of the nature of a parenthesis; whenever there is a doubt, whether they should be marked with the one or the other of the points, the better plan will be to recast the words, and give them beyond question, the form of a comma or a parenthesis.

Sir James Burrow, approves of superadding colon and semi-colon points at the end of a parenthesis.

MORE PARTICULARLY OF THE PARATHESIS.

Sir James Burrow says that one special use of the parathesis is, "That when a Speaker is repeating, or a Writer citing the Words of *another* Person; and finds that his *adding* a single Word, or two or three Words of *his own*, will be necessary or convenient towards ascertaining any equivocal Term or Expression, or clearing up any Doubt; he puts these *added Words* of *his own*, within a PARATHESIS, if he is Writing, or *lowers*

his Voice, if he is speaking them; in order to shew that they are *not* the *original* Words of his *Author*, but *additional* explanatory Words of his *own*. This I apprehend to be the usual *Office* of a *Parathesis*.

"It is marked by Hooks or Brackets or Crotchets, thus []."³⁸

The following are examples of a parathesis;—

It [the word person] was probably employed by our divines as a literal, or perhaps etymological, rendering of the Latin word *persona*.

They [the English and Irish rebels] pretended to have authority from the King and Queen, [Charles the First and his consort], chiefly from the latter, for their insurrection.

Most of his [Bacon's] works were composed in Latin.

When a translation is embodied in a discourse, and the translator adds one or more of the original words, the added word or words is a parathesis; for instance,

It is not lawful for the church to ordain [statuere] anything that is contrary to God's word written.

Quamvis nondum pretium numeratum sit, ac ne arrha [earnest money] quidem data fuerit.

Le marche pied le long [the towing path] des rivieres navigable.

The towing path [le marche pied le long] of a navigable river.

A translation of an entire passage when the original is embodied in a discourse may properly be treated as a parathesis; as,

Homo, naturæ minister et interpres, tantum facit et intelligit, quantum de naturæ ordine re vel mente observaverit; nec amplius scit aut potest. [Man, the servant and expounder of nature, can only understand and act, as far as he observes and contemplates the order of nature; more he can neither know nor do.]

Or, *vice versâ*, the translation being given the original may be made a parathesis.

Obsolete and provincial words and phrases may well be explained in a parathesis:—

A Frankelein [freeholder] was in this compaignie.

Who would fardels [burdens] bear!

When the prisoner came in he was watcherd [wet shod], which proved he had not been all the night in the tallit [hay loft].

The Huntsman crossed the brook at Bowman's Burge [bridge].

THE INTERROGATION OR INTERROGATIVE.

An interrogative speaks for itself: *it is a member of a sentence or a period, in that peculiar form of words, which denotes that a question is asked.*

The note or point of an interrogation should never be used but to point an actual question: an ill use of its point is made in the following example;—

If there should be a debate between a Protestant and a Catholic, whether there is such a place as purgatory? let them remember that they both agree in this, that Christ has made satisfaction or atonement for sin.

In the form of an interrogative, a period or a member of a sentence is sometimes so expressed, as to unite the powers of the interrogation and interjection; conveying at the same time the idea of the answer, whether negative or affirmative, in a most emphatic manner: such members are commonly marked with the interrogative point, and sometimes but rarely with the note of interjection:—

How many are mine iniquities and sins? make me to know my transgression and my sin.

If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, until my change come.

Did I not weep for him that was in trouble? was not my soul grieved for the poor?

Is it for me to abandon my undertaking? cannot I turn from Italy

the Trojan chief? wherefore am I by the fates forbidden? Had not Pallas the power to burn the Argive Fleet?

THE INTERJECTION.

What is an interjection? is it a fragment of one single word? or is it a member or a fragment of a sentence of many words? or is it merely a point? Instead of a long dissertation upon these questions, I will quote some phrases *marked* by Grammarians *with the* interjection-point, and leave my readers to form their own opinions upon the matter.

From the Port Royal Latin Grammar :—

Oh what a country!

Oh wretched me!

Oh too happy!

Alas, where is the religion and fidelity of former days!

Oh unhappy race!

O lamentable!

Ye gods!

Ye men!

Oh sacred Jupiter!

Ah me!

From the Eton Latin Grammar :—

She left the hope of the flock, alas! upon a bare rock.

What madness!

Oh the joyful day of man!

O too fortunate husbandmen, if they knew but their own happiness!

O beautiful boy! trust not too much to your beauty.

This note in its legitimate use, is expressive of astonishment, rapture, or lamentation, and other emotions of the mind; but it is often abused, and pressed by satirists and libellers into their service: one of these writers is afraid to speak out; yet he wishes to satirise or to libel a particular person; to effect this he uses words of courtesy; but he adds the dagger-like note of admiration:

The gallant admiral!

The honorable gentleman!

This pious clergyman!!

The learned civilian!!!

In such hands it may be denominated the coward's-point.

Upon another abuse of this note Blair says,—“it has become a fashion among some writers, to subjoin points of admiration to sentences, which contain nothing but simple affirmations or propositions; as if, by an affected method of pointing, they would transform them in the reader's mind into high figures of eloquence.³⁹”

THE DASH.

This mark was at first called the *break*, and its primary use was to denote that a period had broken off abruptly:

I speak in the presence and fear of the Everlasting God, that my tongue is not my own for it is the Lord's, and to be disposed of according to his pleasure, and not to speak my own words; I have been so long in prison ——— Then he was interrupted by the Judge.

In this way was this mark used in 1662.

The Dash is classed by Lindley Murray among the points: according to him it may be legitimately used, where a significant pause is required,—where a sentence

breaks off abruptly,—or where there is an unexpected turn. Others go beyond Murray and use the dash, in the place of the colon, semi-colon, and parenthesis-points; there are men to be found, who go even yet further, and contend that the dash should, in all cases, be substituted for the colon and semi-colon and comma points. The lawful object of pointing is, as before quoted, to make the period very light and easy to be understood both to the reader and hearer :—dismiss the period-point, the colon-point, and the semi-colon-point and the comma-point, and the parenthesis-point, and substitute the dash !—will its use make periods very light and easy to be understood ? Let colon-points and semi-colon-points and comma-points and parenthesis-points be disused !—will colons and semi-colons and commas be destroyed ? No : they are realities, and wherever the language of civilized life is made use of they must have an existence. It can readily be imagined that ignorance or indolence, perhaps a combination of both, first suggested that the dash should perform all the duties of the colon, semi-colon, comma, and parenthesis points. Cobbett's opinion of the dash is expressed in his concise and pithy language :⁴⁰ "the dash is a cover for ignorance as to the use of points, and it can answer no other purpose." Cobbett would dismiss the dash altogether and he is wrong : others would use it for half a dozen different purposes, and they are equally out of the way.⁴¹

Dean Swift, (if a judgment is to be formed of a man's opinions by his rhymes,) had a contemptible opinion of the dash :—

" All modern trash is
Set forth with numerous breaks and dashes."

Sir James Burrow, as lately as 1768, speaks of the dash only by the name of break.

The dash with Blair was not a favorite mark: he describes it, "as a contrivance practised by some writers, of separating almost all the members of their sentences from each other, by blank lines; as if, by setting them thus asunder, they bestowed some special importance upon them; and required us, in going along, to make a pause at every other word, and weigh it well."⁴²

Although Lindley Murray, in some cases, allows the use of the dash, he makes an observation upon it; that it is often used improperly by hasty and incoherent writers.

However it must be allowed that the dash is become a well known, if not a well understood point.

It appears to me that, besides marking epigrammatical and peculiar turns of expression, the dash may be lawfully used in conjunction with the other points, to qualify, or perhaps it may be said, to augment their several powers in pointing out the different members and fragments of a period, and in denoting certain pauses;—when ever used, unless, as in the example of 1662, to denote a sudden interruption, it appears to me, that it *ought only to be an adjunct to another point*, and never to be used independently.

Some writers have contended for the propriety of other points, than those now commonly in use; for instance Dr. Ward, the Gresham professor, proposed a point to be called the semi-period;—but if the dash be used to qualify other points, the necessity of new points will be avoided.⁴³

THE GENERAL CONCLUSION.

If any one yet clings to the notion that periods, colons, and semi-colons are points, and not members of periods, he is referred to the language of Cicero; "what the Greeks call *commas* and *colons*, we call *commata* [commas] and [*membra*] members."⁴⁴—Quintilian distinctly says, "A member is contained within certain measures; torn from the body it can effect nothing. *Oh skilful men*, is perfect; but, removed from the body, it has no strength, as a hand, foot, or head by itself: when then is the body [period] perfect, even when the conclusion is attained?"⁴⁵

Many writers have no other intention in using any points, than to mark certain pauses, and some masters even of authority, have condescended to teach,—“at a comma stop while you can count *one*,—at a semi-colon *two*,—at a colon *three*,—at a period *four*:”—looking at the imperfection of language, perhaps no better method can be found of teaching infants what pauses are; in the practice of grown up life such rules are of little or no value; the proper length of the several pauses depending upon the nature of the work, and the style of the reader or speaker.

In this work, very little notice has been taken of the rules laid down by Grammarians for pointing: this has been done under a conviction, that a knowledge of what a period is,—that a knowledge that colons, semi-colons, and interrogatives, are members of a complex period,—that a knowledge of what is a comma, a parenthesis, or a parathesis,—added to a knowledge of the uses of the

note of interjection and the dash, will enable a writer, consistently, and correctly, to point his own work.

From the opinion of the ancient anonymous author, "if points be well used they make the sentence very light and easy to be understood, both to the reader and the hearer,"—not an iota ought to be abstracted;—but yet it may confidently be said, that if a sentence requires *one* point to make plain the author's meaning,—or if by pointing, it can be made to bear more meanings than one, it is a faulty sentence; any attempt to mend it can only be cobbling, and the only remedy is wholly to recast it:—"it was not," said Augustus Matthæi, "until the great influx of strangers to Alexandria impaired the purity of the Greek Language, that the art of pointing became an object with the learned." A sentence which *absolutely* requires points, in order to be understood, or by the use of different points, or by the use of the same points in different places, can be made to bear more than one meaning, is deserving of little more consideration than a common puzzle.⁴⁶ Lord Kames remarks, "that if it shall be thought that a defect in perspicuity is easily supplied by accurate punctuation, the answer is, that punctuation may remove a difficulty, but will never produce that peculiar beauty, which is perceived, when the sense comes out clearly and distinctly, by means of a happy arrangement."⁴⁷ Punctuation may make, but can never, *altogether* remove, an ambiguity: it is often not only a question *what* point ought to be used, but where it ought to be used, and if such a question can be raised upon any sentence, it cannot but be an ambiguous one; a happier arrangement of the words, not an alteration in the pointing, can in such a case, be the only effectual remedy.⁴⁸ The language of Blair

on this head is,—“ Having mentioned pointing, I shall here take notice, that it is in vain to propose, by arbitrary punctuation, to amend the defects of a sentence, to correct its ambiguity, or to prevent its confusion.”⁴⁹ A consideration of the following example, will go far to prove that it is in vain to try by *punctuation*, to amend the defects of a sentence, to correct its ambiguity, or to prevent its confusion ; example,

Although Lindley Murray allows the use of the dash in some cases he makes an observation upon it.

As this sentence stands, it is doubtful whether the writer means to say, that *Lindley Murray allows the use of the dash in some cases*, or that *in some cases he makes an observation upon it* ; one man may say that a point should be made at the word *dash*, another at the word *cases* ;—it is more likely to be *this* way says one, it is most likely to be *that* way says another: in good composition *more likely* and *most likely* won't do, there must be no ambiguity ; whenever a doubt arises the sentence must be recast, and not pointed or repointed :—the use of pointing is to facilitate the reading of a correct composition ; it is a perversion to attempt by its means, to render ambiguous sentences plain. The above example of an ambiguous sentence, can be recast in two ways ;—if the writer means, that *Murray allowed the use of the dash in some cases*, it should stand thus ;—

Although Lindley Murray in some cases, allows the use of the dash, he makes an observation upon it.

If the writer means, that *Murray in some cases makes an observation on the dash*, it should stand thus :—

Although Lindley Murray allows the use of the dash, he makes, in some cases, an observation upon it.

But perhaps after all some determined Punctuist will maintain that the meaning of the writer may be rendered clear by punctuation : *for the sake of argument*, let it be allowed to be so ; but our Punctuist must admit that still a question may arise, whether the point is rightly or wrongly placed ; a question which has repeatedly arisen in literary and forensic controversies, and one, which only a recasting of a sentence can obviate.

In the examples just given, it has been shewn, that a sentence may be recast by changing the place of one of the commas ; the next example will also be an ambiguous sentence, which punctuation cannot correct, and the proposition of which cannot be stated with precision, without recasting it, by substituting a noun for its pronoun ; as,

None of the other modern languages of Europe are so strongly marked by accents as our own ; their peculiar advantage is evident in poetry.

The peculiar advantage of what ? Of the modern languages of Europe, or of accents ? The writer, no doubt, intended accents ; if so, he might have given precision to the expressions of his meaning in the following way ;—

None of the other modern languages of Europe are so strongly marked by accents as our own ; the peculiar advantage of accents is evident in poetry.

The happy genius of the Grecian and Roman tongues, with their prepositions, and terminations, and inflections, afforded ample scope for the arrangement of their words in varied forms, and consequently enabled their writers to form periods, approaching to perfection in harmony and sense : nevertheless may not some part of the acknowledged excellence of the Greeks and Romans (particularly of the Greeks), in the composition of their

periods, be attributed to their comparative ignorance of the use of points; this ignorance compelling them, in order that their meaning might not be liable to be misunderstood, to be careful in the arrangement of their words. The excellence of the ancients in the composition of a period, is no reason for the disuse of points: it is an authority against the abuse of words; but it would be absurd (as Matthæi observes) not to avail ourselves of the use of points, because they were unknown to the ancients.

In drawing to a conclusion I will add that hitherto, English Grammarians have obscurely treated of Punctuation: some of them because they have used the same words to express different meanings; Bishop Lowth for instance, uses the words *colons* and *commas*, as well to convey the idea of members and fragments of sentences, as of their points: others because they only used the words in a secondary meaning; Lindley Murray, for instance, uses the words *colon* and *comma* only to signify *points*. Punctuation is to the generality of men a matter of obscurity, and many attempt to conceal their ignorance under the phrase, *Punctuation is merely a matter of taste*: whether a writer shall compile his work in longer or shorter sentences, whether he shall illustrate the principal proposition of a sentence, by one or by many illustrative clauses, may be a *matter of taste*; but he cannot change their nature by pointing: the great use of pointing is to facilitate the reading of a composition.

APPENDIX.



No. I.

IN any thing relating to English Grammar, the authority of Bishop Lowth cannot pass unnoticed : should any one think too little notice has been taken of this author in the body of this work, it will perhaps be thought that the defect is remedied by giving all that he says upon the subject.

The Edition which has been used is a corrected one, published by Dodsley and Cadell in 1775 ; to a point and a letter has the work been followed :—

PUNCTUATION.

PUNCTUATION is the art of marking in writing the several pauses, or rests, between sentences, and the parts of sent-

ences, according to their proper quantity or proportion, as they are expressed in a just and accurate pronunciation.

As the several articulate sounds, the syllables and words, of which sentences consist, are marked by Letters; so the rests and pauses, between sentences and their parts, are marked by Points.

But, though the several articulate sounds are pretty fully and exactly marked by Letters of known and determinate power; yet the several pauses, which are used in a just pronunciation of discourse, are very imperfectly expressed by Points.

For the different degrees of connexion between the several parts of sentences, and the different pauses in a just pronunciation, which express those degrees of connexion according to their proper value, admit of great variety; but the whole number of Points, which we have to express this variety, amounts only to Four.

Hence it is, that we are under a necessity of expressing pauses of the same quantity, on different occasions, by different points; and more frequently, of expressing pauses of different quantity by the same points.

So that the doctrine of Punctuation must needs be very imperfect: few precise rules can be given, which will hold without exception in all cases; but much must be left to the judgment and taste of the writer.

On the other hand, if a greater number of marks were invented to express all the possible different pauses of pronunciation; the doctrine of them would be very perplexed and difficult, and the use of them would rather embarrass than assist the reader.

It remains therefore, that we be content with the Rules of Punctuation, laid down with as much exactness as the

nature of the subject will admit: such as may serve for a general direction, to be accommodated to different occasions; and to be supplied, where deficient, by the writer's judgment.

The several degrees of Connexion between Sentences, and between their principal constructive parts, Rhetoricians have considered under the following distinctions, as the most obvious and remarkable: the Period, Colon, Semicolon, and Comma.

The Period is the whole Sentence, complete in itself, wanting nothing to make a full and perfect sense, and not connected in construction with a subsequent Sentence.

The Colon, or Member, is a chief constructive part, or greater division, of a Sentence.

The Semicolon, or Half-member, is a less constructive part, or subdivision, of a Sentence or Member.

A Sentence or Member is again subdivided into Commas, or Segments; which are the least constructive parts of a Sentence or Member, in this way of considering it; for the next subdivision would be the resolution of it into Phrases and Words.

The Grammarians have followed this division of the Rhetoricians, and have appropriated to each of these distinctions its mark, or Point; which takes its name from the part of the Sentence, which it is employed to distinguish; as follows:

The Period	} is thus marked {	.
The Colon		:
The Semicolon		;
The Comma		,

The proportional quantity, or time, of the points, with respect to one another, is determined by the following general rule: The Period is a pause in quantity or dur-

ation double of the Colon ; the Colon is double of the Semicolon ; and the Semicolon is double of the Comma. So that they are in the same proportion to one another, as the Semibref, the Minim, the Crotchet, and the Quaver, in Music. The precise quantity, or duration, of each Pause or Note cannot be defined ; for that varies with the Time ; and both in Discourse and Music the same Composition may be rehearsed in a quicker or a slower Time : but in Music the proportion between the Notes remains ever the same ; and in Discourse, if the doctrine of Punctuation were exact, the proportion between the Pauses would be ever invariable.

The Points then being designed to express the Pauses, which depend on the different degrees of connexion between Sentences, and between their principal constructive parts ; in order to understand the meaning of the Points, and to know how to apply them properly, we must consider the nature of a Sentence, as divided into its principal constructive parts ; and the degrees of connexion between those parts, upon which such division of it depends.

To begin with the least of these principal constructive parts, the Comma. In order more clearly to determine the proper application of the Point which marks it, we must distinguish between an Imperfect Phrase, a Simple Sentence, and a Compound Sentence.

An Imperfect Phrase contains no assertion, or does not amount to a Proposition or Sentence.

A Simple Sentence has but one Subject, and one finite Verb.

A Compound Sentence has more than one Subject, or one finite Verb, either expressed or understood ; or it consists of two or more simple Sentences connected together.

In a Sentence the Subject and the Verb may be each of them accompanied with several Adjuncts; as the Object, the End, the Circumstances of Time, Place, Manner, and the like: and the Subject or Verb may be either immediately connected with them, or mediately; that is, by being connected with some thing, which is connected with some other; and so on.

If the several Adjuncts affect the Subject or the Verb in a different manner, they are only so many Imperfect Phrases; and the Sentence is Simple.

A Simple Sentence admits of no Point, by which it may be divided, or distinguished into parts.

If the several Adjuncts affect the Subject or the Verb in the same manner, they may be resolved into so many Simple Sentences: the Sentence then becomes Compounded, and it must be divided into its parts by Points.

For, if there are several Subjects belonging in the same manner to one Verb, or several Verbs belonging in the same manner to one Subject, the Subjects and Verbs are still to be accounted equal in number: for every Verb must have its Subject, and every Subject its Verb; and every one of the Subjects, or Verbs, should or may have its point of distinction.

EXAMPLES:

"The passion for praise produces excellent effects in women of sense."—*Addison*, Spect. No. 73.

In this Sentence *passion* is the Subject, and *produces* the Verb: each of which is accompanied and connected with its Adjuncts. The Subject is not passion in general, but a particular passion determined by its Adjunct of Specification, as we may call it; the passion *for praise*. So

likewise the Verb is immediately connected with its object, *excellent effects*; and mediately, that is, by the intervention of the word *effects*, with *women*, the Subject in which these effects are produced; which again is connected with its Adjunct of Specification; for it is not meant of women in general, but of women of *sense* only. Lastly, it is to be observed, that the Verb is connected with each of these several Adjuncts in a different manner; namely, with *effects* as the object; with *women*, as the subject of them; with *sense*, as the quality or characteristic of those women. The Adjuncts therefore are only so many imperfect Phrases; the Sentence is a Simple Sentence, and admits of no Point, by which it may be distinguished into parts.

"The passion for praise, which is so very vehement in the fair sex, produces excellent effects in women of sense."

Here a new Verb is introduced, accompanied with Adjuncts of its own; and the Subject is repeated by the Relative Pronoun *which*. It now becomes a Compound Sentence, made up of two Simple Sentences, one of which is inserted in the middle of the other; it must therefore be distinguished into its component parts by a Point placed on each side of the additional Sentence.

"How many instances have we [in the fair sex] of chastity, fidelity, devotion! How many Ladies distinguish themselves by the education of their children, care of their families, and love of their husbands; which are the great qualities and achievements of womankind: as the making of war, the carrying on of traffick, the administration of justice, are those by which men grow famous, and get themselves a name!"—*Ibid.*

In the first of these two Sentences, the Adjuncts *chastity*, *fidelity*, *devotion*, are connected with the Verb by the word *instances* in the same manner, and in effect make so many distinct Sentences: "how many instances have

we of chastity ! how many instances have we of fidelity ! how many instances have we of devotion ! " They must therefore be separated from one another by a Point. The same may be said of the Adjuncts "education of their children," &c., in the former part of the next Sentence : as likewise of the several Subjects, "the making of war," &c., in the latter part ; which have in effect each their Verb ; for each of these "is an atchievement by which men grow famous."

As Sentences themselves are divided into Simple and Compounded, so the Members of Sentences may be divided likewise into Simple and Compounded Members : for whole Sentences, whether Simple or Compounded, may become Members of other Sentences by means of some additional connexion.

Simple Members of Sentences closely connected together in one Compounded member, or sentence, are distinguished or separated by a Comma : as in the foregoing examples.

So likewise, the Case Absolute ; Nouns in Apposition, when consisting of many terms ; the Participle with something depending on it ; are to be distinguished by the Comma : for they may be resolved into Simple Members.

When an address is made to a person, the Noun, answering to the Vocative Case in Latin, is distinguished by a Comma.

EXAMPLES :

" This said, He form'd thee, Adam ! thee, O man,
Dust of the ground."

" Now morn, her rosy steps in th' eastern clime
Advancing, sow'd the earth with orient pearl."—*Milton*.

Two Nouns, or two Adjectives, connected by a single

Copulative or Disjunctive, are not separated by a Point : but when there are more than two, or where the Conjunction is understood, they must be distinguished by a Comma.

Simple Members connected by Relatives, and Comparatives, are for the most part distinguished by a Comma : but when the Members are short in Comparative Sentences ; and when two Members are closely connected by a Relative, restraining the general notion of the Antecedent to a particular sense ; the pause becomes almost insensible, and the Comma is better omitted.

EXAMPLES :

" Raptures, transports, and extasies are the rewards which they confer : sighs and tears, prayers and broken hearts, are the offerings which are paid to them."—*Addison*, *ibid*.

" Gods partial, changeful, passionate, unjust :
Whose attributes were rage, revenge, or lust."—*Pope*.

" What is sweeter than honey ? and what is stronger than a lion ?"

A circumstance of importance, though no more than an Imperfect Phrase, may be set off with a Comma on each side, to give it greater force and distinction.

EXAMPLE :

" The principle may be defective or faulty ; but the consequences it produces are so good, that, for the benefit of mankind, it ought not to be extinguished."—*Addison*, *ibid*.

A Member of a Sentence, whether Simple or Compounded, that requires a greater pause than a Comma, yet does not of itself make a complete Sentence, but is followed by something closely depending on it, may be distinguished by a Semicolon.

EXAMPLE :

" But as this passion for admiration, when it works according to

reason, improves the beautiful part of our species in every thing that is laudable ; so nothing is more destructive to them, when it is governed by vanity and folly."—*Addison*, *ibid*.

Here the whole Sentence is divided into two parts by the Semicolon; each of which parts is a Compounded Member, divided into its Simple Members by the Comma.

A Member of a Sentence, whether Simple or Compounded, which of itself would make a complete Sentence, and so requires a greater pause than a Semicolon, yet is followed by an additional part making a more full and perfect Sense, may be distinguished by a Colon.

EXAMPLE :

" Were all books reduced to their quintessence, many a bulky author would make his appearance in a penny paper : there would be scarce any such thing in nature as a folio : the works of an age would be contained on a few shelves : not to mention millions of volumes, that would be utterly annihilated."—*Addison*, *Spect. No. 124*.

Here the whole Sentence is divided into four parts by Colons: the first and last of which are Compounded Members, each divided by a Comma; the second and third are Simple Members.

When a Semicolon has preceded, and a greater pause is still necessary; a Colon may be employed, though the Sentence be incomplete.

The Colon is also commonly used, when an Example, or a Speech, is introduced.

When a Sentence is so far perfectly finished, as not to be connected in construction with the following Sentence, it is marked with a Period.

In all cases, the proportion of the several Points in respect to one another is rather to be regarded, than their supposed precise quantity, or proper office, when taken separately.

Beside the Points which mark the pauses in discourse, there are others which denote a different modulation of the voice in correspondence with the sense. These are

The Interrogation Point,	} thus marked {	?
The Exclamation Point,		!
The Parenthesis,		()

The Interrogation and Exclamation Points are sufficiently explained by their names: they are indeterminate as to their quantity or time, and may be equivalent in that respect to a Semicolon, a Colon, or a Period, as the sense requires. They mark an Elevation of the voice.

The Parenthesis incloses in the body of a Sentence a member inserted into it, which is neither necessary to the Sense, nor at all affects the Construction. It marks a moderate Depression of the voice, with a pause greater than a Comma.

No. II.

I cannot quote Dr. Johnson as an undisputed authority for the general principles advanced in the Essay; but his high reputation as an English Lexicographer and Grammarian, requires me to give *all* that he says upon the subject. However great the authority of an author on a general subject may be, yet we should not allow the splendour of his name to prevent our forming a contrary opinion on any particular subject, to which it is evident *his* attention has not been *particularly* drawn:—This ought to be the case with what Dr. Johnson says upon punctuation;—upon it, *as a whole*, he has not penned a

single page; he confines himself to defining certain words connected with it, and it is plain that his opinions upon them were hastily formed.

The Edition made use of in giving the following extracts, is one printed at London, for Thomas Tegg, 1841, *verbatim* from the Author's last folio edition.

PUNCTUATION, n. s. [*punctum*, Lat.] The act or method of pointing.

It ought to do it willingly, without being forced to it by any change in the words or *punctuation*.—*Addison*.

POINT. Note of distinction in writing; a stop.

Commas and *points* they set exactly right,
And 'twere a sin to rob them of their mite.—*Pope*.

To POINT, v. n. To distinguish words or sentences by points.

Fond the Jews are of their method of pointing.—*Forbes*.

To STOP, v. a. [*estouper*, Fr. *stoppare*, Ital. *stoppen*, Dut.]

STOP, n. s. [from the verb.]

A point in writing, by which sentences are distinguished.

Even the iron-pointed pen,
That notes the tragick dooms of men,
Wet with tears still'd from the eyes
Of the flinty destinies,
Would have learn'd a softer style,
And have been asham'd to spoil
His life's sweet story by the haste
Of a cruel *stop* ill-placed.—*Crashaw*.

PERIOD, n. s. [*periode*, Fr.] A complete sentence from one full stop to another.

Periods are beautiful when they are not too long: for so they have their strength too as in a pike or javelin.—*Ben Johnson*.

Is this the confidence you gave me?
 Lend on it safely, not a period
 Shall be unpaid for me.—*Milton*.

Syllogism is made use of to discover a fallacy cunningly wrapt up in a smooth period.—*Locke*.

For the assistance of memories, the first word of every period in every page may be written in distinct colours.—*Watts*.

COLON, n. s. A point (:) used to mark a pause greater than that of a comma, and less than that of a period. Its use is not very exactly fixed; nor is it very necessary, being confounded by most with the semicolon. It was used, before punctuation was refined, to mark almost any sense less than a period. To apply it properly, we should place it, perhaps, only where the sense is continued without dependence of grammar or construction; as,

I love him, I despise him: I have long ceased to trust, but shall never forbear to succour him.

SEMICOLON, n. s. Half a colon; a point made thus (;) to note a greater pause than that of a comma.

COMMA, n. s. The point which notes the distinction of clauses and order of construction in the sentence: marked thus (,)

Commas and points they set exactly right.—*Pope*.

PARENTHESIS, n. s. A sentence so included in another sentence, as that it may be taken out, without injuring the sense of that which encloses it, being commonly marked thus, ()

In vain is my person excepted by a parenthesis of words, when so many are armed against me with swords.—*King Charles*.

In his Indian relations, are contained strange and incredible accounts; he is seldom mentioned without a derogatory parenthesis in any author.—*Brown*.

Thou shalt be seen,
 Tho' with some short parenthesis between,
 High on the throne of wit.—*Dryden*.

Don't suffer every occasional thought to carry you away into a long *parenthesis*, and thus stretch out your discourse, and divert you from the point in hand.—*Watt's Logick*.

INTERROGATION, n. s. [*interrogation*, Fr. *interrogatio*, Lat.]

1. The act of questioning.
2. A question put; an inquiry.
3. A note that marks a question: thus (?) as,
Does Job serve God for nought?

INTERROGATIVE, adj. [*interrogatif*, Fr. *interrogativus*, Lat.] Denoting a question; expressed in a questionary form of words.

INTERROGATIVE, n. s. A pronoun used in asking questions: as

Who? What? Which? Whether?

INTERJECTION, n. s. [*interjection*, Fr. *interjectio*, Lat.] A part of speech that discovers the mind to be seized or affected with some passion: such as are in English,

O! Alas! Ah!—*Clarke's Latin Grammar*.

Their wild natural notes, when they would express their passions, are at the best but like natural *interjections*, to discover their passions or impressions.—*Hales' Origin of Mankind*.

TO BREAK, v. a. pret. I broke or brake; part. pass. broke, or broken, [Saxon.]

To stop; to make cease.

Break their talk, mistress Quickly; my kinsman shall speak for himself.—*Shakespeare*.

BREAK, n. s. [from the verb.]

A pause; an interruption.

A line drawn, noting that the sense is suspended.

All modern trash is

Set forth with num'rous *breaks* and dashes.—*Swift*.

TO DASH, v. a. [The etymology of this word, in any of its senses, is very doubtful.]

DASH, n. s. [From the verb.] A mark in writing: a line ———, to note a pause, or omission.

He is afraid of letters and characters, of notes and dashes, which, set together, do signify nothing.—*Brown's Vulgar Errours.*

In modern wit, all printed trash is
Set off with num'rous breaks and dashes.—*Swift.*

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No. III.

EXTRACT FROM THE ENGLISH HEXAPLA,  
*Exhibiting six important English Translations of the  
New Testament Scriptures:—*

|          |             |                |             |
|----------|-------------|----------------|-------------|
| Wicklif, | M.CCC.LXXX. | Genevan,       | M.D.LVII.   |
| Tyndale, | M.D.XXXIV.  | Anglo-Rhemish, | M.D.LXXXII. |
| Cranmer, | M.D.XXXIX.  | Authorized,    | M.DC.XI.    |

The original Greek text after Scholz. London: Samuel Bagster & Sons. M.DCCC.XLI.

These extracts are given without the slightest alteration, either as to pointing or otherwise.

THERFOR whanne jhesus was borun in Bethleem of iuda, in the dayes of king Eroude: lo astromyens camen from the eest to ierusalem & seiden, wher is he that is borun king of iewis? for we han seen his sterre in the eest; and we comen for to worship hym.—*Translation by Wicklif—1380.*

WHEN Iesus was borne at Bethleem in Iury, in the tyme of Herode the kynge. Behold, there came wyse men from the eest to Ierusalem saynge: Where is he that is borne kynge of the Iues? We have sene his starre in the eest, and are come to worship him.—*The version of William Tyndale—1534.*

WHEN Iesus was borne at Bethleem a cite of Iewri, in the tyme of Herode the kynge. Behold, there came wysemen from the east to Ierusalem, sayinge: where is he that is borne kynge of Iewes? For we haue sene hys

starre in the east, and are come to worshyp him.—*Cranmer's or the Great Bible*—1539.

VVHEN Iesus was borne at Bethlehem in Iurie, in the tyme of Herode the king: Beholde there came wise men from the East to Ierusalem, Saying, Where is that king of Iewes that is borne? For we have sene his starre in the East, and are come to worship him.—*Translation made by the English Exiles at Geneva, commonly called the Geneva New Testament*—1557.

WHEN IESVS therefore vvas borne in Bethlehem of Iuda in the dayes of Herod the King, behold, there came Sages from the East to Hierusalem, saying, vvhere is he that is borne King of the Ievves? For vve haue seene his starre in the East, and are come to adore him.—*The Anglo-Rhemish Translation of the Bible, made by the Catholics of the English Colledge at Rheims, from the Latin Vulgate*—1582.

Now when Iesus was borne in Bethlehem of Iudea, in the dayes of Herod the king, behold, there came Wise men from the East to Hierusalem, Saying, Where is he that is borne King of the Iewes? for we haue seene his starre in the East, and are come to worship him.—*King James' Bible or the Authorized Version*—1611.

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#### No. IV.

In different parts of the Essay I have referred to a work which is entitled, "*Ascensius Declynsons with the Plain Expositor.*" The only notice I find of this work, is in a work entitled, "*Typographia, or the Printers' Instructor, by J. Johnson, Printer,*" which was printed in 1824. I have failed in tracing Mr. Johnson, and I believe him to be dead:—allowed to search the Bodleian Library I



could not find it there;—Dr. Dibdin kindly answered a letter to me on the subject:—upon consideration I come to the conclusion that Johnson is not of sufficient authority to attribute the work to Wynkyn de Worde, and that some error may have crept into his statement. Dr. Dibdin says, “in the absence of the book it is impossible to pronounce an accurate opinion upon the type. Wynkyn de Worde is not unlikely to have been the printer, as he printed a great many grammatical works, and Jodocus Badius Ascensius, the director of the Lyons press, was among the most celebrated Grammarians and Editors of ancient classics of the day.” Without passing an opinion on the subject, I will give what Johnson says upon the subject, and the extract itself, *verbatim*, leaving every reader to form his own opinion on the matter.

“ASCENSIUS DECLYNSONS WITH PLAYNE EXPOSITOR.

Without date, place, or printer's name. Quarto.

“The above is a head Title, which occurs on sign. A; but the work is without Title-page, Date, Printer's name, or Device; and it is ascribed to Wynkyn de Worde from a peculiar type which is found in the *Ortus Vocabularum*, by the same Printer. It extends to v in sixes; after which are an Epilogue, and “address to the young learners to consider diligently the rules of pointing,” &c. The following is an amusing extract containing the ancient method of Punctuation:—

“OF THE CRAFT OF POYNTING.

“Ther be five maner pontys, and diuisions most vside with cunning men: the which, if they be wel vsid, make the sentens very light, and esy to vnderstonde both to the rede, & the herer, & they be these: *virgil*, come, parenthesis, playnt poynt, and interrogatif. A *virgil* is a sclender stryke: lenynge forwarde thiswyse, be tokynyng a lytyl, short rest without any perfetnes yet of sentens: as betwene the five poyntis a fore rehersed. A come is with tway titils thiswyse: betokynyng a lenger rest: and the sentens yet ether is vnperfet: or els, if it

be perfet: ther cummith more after, longyng to it: the which more comynly can not be perfect by itself without at the lest summat of it: that gothe a fore. A parenthesis is with tway crokyd virgils: as an olde mone, & a neu bely to bely: the whiche be set theton afore the begynnyng, and thetother after the latyr ende of a clause: comyng within another clause: that may be perfet: thof the clause, so comyng betwene: wer away and therfore it is sowndyne comynly a note lower, than the vtter clause. yf the sentens cannot be perfet without the ynner clause, then stede of the first crokyde virgil a streght virgil wol do very wel: and stede of the later must nedis be a come. A playne poynt is with won titill thiswyse, & it cumeth after the ende of al the whole sentens betokinyng a longe rest. An interrogatif is with tway titils; the vpper rysyng this wyse? & it cumeth after the ende of a whole reason: wheryn ther is sum question axside. the whiche ende of the reson, tryyng as it were for an answare: risyth vpwarde. we haue made these rulis in englishe: by cause they be as profitable, and necessary to be kepte in euery mother tunge, as in latin. Sethyn we (as we wolde to god: euery precher wolde do) haue kepte owre rulis bothe in owre englishe, and latyn: what nede we, sethyn owre own be sufficient vnogh: to put any other exemplis."

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No. V.

A judicious friend, who has perused my proof sheets, suggests that the examples in the body of the work, are not sufficiently numerous: to remedy this defect, extracts, from different authors, are copied *to a letter and to a point*, and in juxtaposition the same extracts are placed, pointed in accordance with the principles contended for.

Before the work of an author is quoted as an authority for pointing, we ought to know that he attended to the pointing of some one edition of that work, and that *that* edition has been followed in the one we make use of: the names of the authors of the following quotations, are *only* added to shew that the extracts have been collected from many different quarters:—

God having designed man for a sociable creature, made him not only with an inclination, and under a necessity to have fellowship with those of his own kind ; but furnished him also with language which was to be the great instrument, and common tye of society. Man therefore had by nature his organs so fashioned, as to be *fit to frame articulate sounds*, which we call words. But this was not enough to produce language ; for parrots, and several other birds, will be taught to make articulate sounds distinct enough, which yet, by no means, are capable of language.—*Locke*.

If musick be the food of love, play on,  
Give me excess of it ; that, surfeiting,  
The appetite may sicken, and so die.—  
That strain again ;—it had a dying fall :  
O, it came o'er my ear like the sweet South,  
That breathes upon a bank of violets,  
Stealing and giving odour.—*Shakspeare*.

It was a fixed maxim in this reign [William the Conqueror] as well as in some of the subsequent, that no native of the island should ever be advanced to any dignity, ecclesiastical, civil, or military. The king, therefore, upon Stigand's deposition, promoted Lanfranc, a Milanese monk, celebrated for his learning and piety, to the vacant see. This prelate was rigid in defending the prerogatives of his station ; and after long process before the Pope, he obliged Thomas, a Norman monk, who had been appointed to the see of York, to acknowledge the primacy of the Archbishop of Canterbury.—*Hume*.

In quadrupeds, the deficiency of teeth is usually com-

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In quadrupeds, the deficiency of teeth is usually com-

pensated by the faculty of rumination. The sheep, deer, and ox tribe are without fore teeth in the upper jaw. These ruminates. The horse and ass are furnished with teeth in the upper jaw, and do not ruminate. In the former class the grass and hay descend into the stomach nearly in the state in which they are cropped from the pasture or gathered from the bundle. In the stomach they are softened by the gastric juice, which in these animals is unusually copious.—*Paley*.

The pleasantest part of a man's life is generally that which passes in courtship, provided his passion be sincere, and the party beloved kind with discretion. Love, desire, hope, all the pleasing motions of the soul rise in the pursuit.—*Addison*.

—mute

The camel labours with the heaviest load,  
And the wolf dies in silence,—not bestow'd  
In vain should such example be; if they,  
Things of ignoble or of savage mood,  
Endure and shrink not, we of nobler clay  
May temper it to bear,—it is but for a day.—*Byron*.

Were women admitted to plead in courts of judicature, I am persuaded they would carry the eloquence of the bar to greater heights than it has yet arrived at. If any one doubt this, let him but be present at those debates which frequently arise among the ladies of the British fishery.—*Addison*.

Swift alluding, in a letter, to the frequent instances of a broken correspondence after a long absence, gives the

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Sir Hudibras his passing worth ;  
The manner how he sally'd forth.  
His arms and equipage are shewn ;  
His horses virtues and his own.  
The adventure of the Bear and Fiddle  
Is sung, but breaks off in the middle.—*Butler*.

Trade increases the wealth and glory of a country ; but its real strength and stamina are to be looked for among the cultivators of the land. In their simplicity of life is found the simpleness of virtue—the integrity and courage of freedom. These true genuine souls of the earth are invincible ; and they surround and hem in the mercantile bodies ; even if these bodies, which supposition I totally disclaim, could be supposed disaffected to the cause of liberty.—*Lord Chatham*.

I will give *The Man of Pleasure's* character in a manner less perplexed, and which your sister may probably censure as too plain ; and may wish a clue were wanting to find the meaning.

He is one, who, desirous of being more happy than any man *can* be, is less happy than most men are.

One, who seeks happiness every where, but where it is to be found.

One, who out-toils the labourer, not only without his wages, but paying dearly for it.

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He is an immortal being, that has but two marks of a man about him, upright stature, and the power of playing the fool, which a monkey has not.

He is an immortal being, that would lose none of its most darling delights, if he were a brute in the mire; but would lose them all, if he were an angel in heaven.

It is certain, therefore, that he desires not to be there: And if he not so much as desires it now, how can he ever hope it, when his day of dissipation is over? and if no hope—what is our Man of Pleasure? A man of distraction and despair to-morrow.—*Young.*

#### LAWYERS.

I oft have heard him say, how he admir'd  
Men of your large profession, that could speak  
To every cause, and things meer contraries,  
Till they were hoarse again; yet all be law;  
That with most quick agility could turn,  
And return, make knots and undo them,  
Give fork'd council, take provoking gold  
On either hand and put it up.—*Ben Jonson.*

Common swearing, if it have any serious meaning at all, argues in man a perpetual distrust of his own reputation, and is an acknowledgment that he thinks his bare word not to be worthy of credit. And it is so far from adorning and filling a man's discourse, that it makes it look swollen and bloated, and more bold and blustering than becomes persons of genteel and good breeding.—*Tillotson.*

Almost all the parts of our bodies require some ex-

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pense. The feet demand shoes; the legs, stockings; the rest of the body, clothing; and the belly, a good deal of victuals. Our eyes, though exceedingly useful, ask, when reasonable, only the cheap assistance of a pair of spectacles, which could not much impair our finances. But the eyes of other people are the eyes that ruin us. If all but myself were blind, I should want neither fine clothes, fine houses, nor fine furniture.—*Franklin*.

How have I seen the puzzled lover vex'd,  
To read a letter with hard words perplex'd.  
A style too coarse, takes from a handsome face,  
And makes us wish an uglier in its place.—*Congreve*.

Friendship is like a debt of honour, the moment it is talked of, it loses its real name, and assumes the more ungrateful form of obligation. From hence we find that those who regularly undertake to cultivate friendship, find ingratitude generally repays their endeavours.—*Goldsmith*.

Yet your churchyard  
Seems, if such freedom may be used with you,  
To say that you are heedless of the past.  
Here's neither head nor footstone, plate of brass,  
Cross-bones or skull, type of our earthly state  
Or emblem of our hopes: the dead man's home  
Is but a fellow to that pasture field.—*Wordsworth*.

I begin my letter by telling you that my wife has been returned from abroad about a month, and that her health, though feeble and precarious, is better than it has been these two years. She is much your servant, and as she

pense: the feet demand shoes; the legs, stockings; the rest of the body, clothing; the belly, a good deal of victuals:—our eyes, though exceedingly useful, ask when reasonable, only the cheap assistance of spectacles, which could not much impair our finances. But the eyes of other people are the eyes that ruin us: if all but myself were blind I should want neither fine clothes, fine houses, nor fine furniture.—*Franklin*.

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has been her own physician with some success, imagines she could be yours with the same. Would to God you was within her reach. She would, I believe, prescribe a great deal of the *medicina animi*, without having recourse to the *books of Tresmegistus*.—Pope is now in my library with me, and writes to the world, to the present and to future ages, whilst I begin this letter, which he is to finish to you. What good he will do to mankind I know not; this comfort he may be sure of, he cannot do less than you have done before him.—*Bolingbroke*.

She never told her love,  
But let concealment, like a worm i' the bud,  
Feed on her damask cheek.—*Shakspeare*.

The *grande monde* worship a sort of idol, which daily creates men by a kind of manufactory operation. This *idol* (a tailor) is placed in the highest parts of the house on an altar erected about three feet; he is shewn in the posture of a Persian Emperor, sitting on a *superficies*, with his legs interwoven under him. This god had a *goose* for his ensign; whence it is that some learned men pretend to deduce his original from *Jupiter Capitolinus*.—*Swift*.

I remember,  
For many years ago I pass'd this road,  
There was a foot-way all along the fields  
By the brook-side—'tis gone—and that dark cleft!  
To me it does not seem to wear the face  
Which then it did.—*Wordsworth*.

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To me it does not seem to wear the face  
Which then it did.—*Wordsworth*.

## No. VI.

## HEBREW POINTS.

Hebrew points have no relation to the points of English Grammar: at the beginning the Hebrew had neither letters nor other marks to distinguish the vowels: when it became comparatively a dead language, points, or vowel points, as they were termed, were added to mark the places of the vowels. Sir John Burrow quotes anonymously, in reference to Hebrew points, and having in view the most sacred copy of the Jewish law, the following passage:—"Constans enim et antiquissima est Rabinorum Sententia, 'legem a *Mose* scriptam esse sine punctis, sine accentibus, sine paraschis, sine versuum, imo sine verborum distinctione.'" [It is a fixed and ancient opinion of the Rabbins that the law was written by *Moses* without vowel points, without accents, without marks, without any distinction between the verses, nay, without any distinction between the words.]

## No. VII.

Besides the marks commonly called *Points*, there are other notes or characters frequently made use of in composition: the following list, taken, with very little alteration, is from Lindley Murray's Grammar:—

"An Apostrophe, marked thus ' is used to abbreviate or shorten a word; as, 'tis for *it is*; tho' for *though*; e'en for *even*; judg'd for *judged*: its chief use is to show the

genitive case of nouns: as, 'A man's property; a woman's ornament.'

"A Caret, marked thus ^, is placed where some word happens to be left out in writing, and which is inserted over the line. This mark is also called a circumflex, when placed over a particular vowel, to denote a long syllable; as, 'Euphrâtes.'

"A Hyphen, marked thus -, is employed in connecting compounded words; as, 'Lap-dog, tea-pot, pre-existence, self-love, to-morrow, mother-in-law.' It is also used when a word is divided, and the former part is written or printed at the end of one line, and the latter part at the beginning of another; in this case it is placed at the end of the first line, not at the beginning of the second.

"The Acute Accent, marked thus ' ; as, 'Fâncy.' The Grave thus ` ; as, 'Fâvour.' In English, the Accentual marks are chiefly used in spelling-books and dictionaries, to mark the syllables which require a particular stress of the voice in pronunciation: the stress is laid on long and short syllables indiscriminately; in order to distinguish the one from the other, some writers of dictionaries have placed the grave on the former, and the acute on the latter, in this manner; "Mînor, mîneral, lively, líved, rival, ríver.'

"A Diæresis, thus marked ¨, consists of two points placed over one of the two vowels that would otherwise make a diphthong, and parts them into two syllables; as, 'Creâtor, coâdjutor, aërial.'

"A Section, marked thus §, is the division of a discourse or chapter, into less parts or portions.


"A Paragraph ¶ denotes the beginning of a new subject, or a sentence not connected with the foregoing:



this character is chiefly used in the Old and New Testaments.

"A quotation " ". Two inverted commas are generally placed at the beginning of a phrase or a passage, which is quoted or transcribed from the speaker or author in his own words, and two commas in their direct position, are placed at the conclusion; as,

"The proper study of mankind is man."

"An Index or Hand  points out a remarkable passage, or something that requires particular attention.

"A Brace } is used in poetry at the end of a triplet or three lines, which have the same rhyme. In prose, braces are also used to connect a number of words with one common term, and are introduced to prevent a repetition in writing or printing.

"An Asterisk or star \* directs the reader to some note in the margin, or at the bottom of the page. Two or three asterisks generally denote the omission of some letters in a word, or of some bold or indelicate expression, or some defect in the manuscript.

"A dash — is often used elliptically, when some letters in a word, or some words are omitted: as, 'The k—g,' for 'the king.' In the place of an obscene or blasphemous word, a dash is commonly substituted."

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#### No. VIII.

*List of Authors, any of whose works have, in the compilation of this Essay, been in any way made use of (ex-*

*cepting for quotations used as examples) or referred to, and the Titles of many of the Works :—*

AINSWORTH, ROBERT, a learned English grammarian, born 1660. *Thesaurus Linguae Latinæ*; 4to edition, 1772; edited by Patrick.

ARISTOTLE. *Aristotelis Rhetorica ex Recensione Immanuelis Bekkeri*; Berlin, 1831.

ARISTOPHANES of Byzantium, the founder of the Alexandrine school of criticism, was born B.C. about 240: only a small part of his works remain:—quoted on the authority of Vossius.

BLAIR, HUGH, D.D., F.R.S., Ed., one of the Ministers of the High Church, and Professor of Rhetoric and Belles Lettres in the University of Edinburgh. *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*.

BRENAN, JUSTIN. *Composition and Punctuation familiarly explained for those who have neglected the Study of Grammar*; third edition.

BURROW, SIR JAMES, Knight, F.R.S. and F.S.A., Master of the Crown Office, and among the legal profession a well-known Reporter. *A Few Thoughts upon Pointing and some other Helps towards Perspicuity of Expression*, added by way of Appendix to the first volume of his *Reports of the Decisions of the Court of King's Bench upon Settlement Cases*; London, 1768.

N.B.—Sir James afterwards enlarged *The Thoughts upon Pointing*, and published them as an *Essay on Punctuation*, entitled, "*De Ratione et usu Interpungendi*:" this Essay I have not met with.

CAMPBELL, GEORGE, D.D., a minister of the Scotch Church, born 1719. *Philosophy of Rhetoric*.

CHAMBERS' *Cyclopedia*.

CICERO. M. T. Ciceronis ad Marc. Brutum Orator ; one of the Delphine editions reprinted at the Clarendon, 1716.

COBBETT, WILLIAM, formerly M.P. for Oldham. A Grammar of the English Language.

EUTHALIUS. Quoted from Horne's Introduction to the Scriptures.

GAZA, THEODORE, born at Thessalonica in 1358. One of his principal works was *Grammaticæ Græcæ*, printed in Greek at Venice in 1455, and with the Latin translation of Erasmus, at Basil, in 1522 : mentioned on the authority of the Port Royal Latin Grammar.

HEDERICUS, BENJAMIN, born in 1675. M. Beni. Hederici Lexicon, recensitum et auctum a Sam. Patrick, L.L.D. ; tert. edit. a Gul. Young, 1755.

HERMOGENES, a Greek rhetorician, who flourished about the year 161. Only a portion of his works remain : mentioned on the authority of Vossius.

HOME, HENRY—See KAMES.

HORNE, THOMAS HARTWELL, M.A. Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures : sixth edition, 1828.

JEROME or HIERONYMUS, St. One of the Fathers of the Church ; he studied at Rome under Donatus the Grammarian : cited on the authority of Horne.

JOHNSON, SAMUEL, L.L.D., born 1709. Dictionary of the English Language.

KAMES LORD, HENRY HOME, a Scotch judge, born 1696. Elements of Criticism : 4th edition, 1769.

KETT, HENRY, B.D., Fellow and Tutor of Trinity College, Oxford. Elements of General Knowledge, 1802.

LANCELOT, CLAUDE, Author of the Greek and Latin Grammars commonly called *The Port Royal Grammars* ;

he out of modesty concealed himself under the general name of the Society of Port Royal. The Latin Grammar: an English translation, by T. Nugent, L.L.D.

LIPSIUS, JUSTUS, an eminent critic, born 1547. His Notes to an edition of the works of Seneca.—*See* SENECA.

LOWTH, ROBERT, born 1710, Bishop of St. David's and afterwards of London. A Short Introduction to English Grammar, with Critical Notes: a new edition, corrected; published by J. Dodsley and T. Cadell, 1775.

MATTHÆI, AUGUSTUS. Greek Grammar, in German, by Augustus Matthæi, translated by E. V. Blomfield, and revised by John Kenrick, M.A. 1837.

MURRAY, LINDLEY. English Grammar, with an Appendix, Twenty-fourth edition, 1813. Mr. Murray was a native of Pennsylvania, a Member of the Society of Friends, and in the latter part of his life domiciliated in England.

PORT ROYAL DES CHAMPS. A celebrated French school, which flourished from 1646 to 1660: its professors published in concert a number of school books, of high reputation—*See* LANCELOT.

QUINTILIAN. M. Fabii, Quintiliani de Institutione Oratoria Libri Duodecim: edited by James Ingram, S.T.B., then Fellow of Trinity College, Oxford, 1809: now Principal of the same college.

SCALIGER, JULIUS CÆSAR. A learned critic, born 1484: quoted on the authority of Vossius.

SCHREVELIUS, CORNELIUS, died in 1667. Cornelii Schrevelii Lexicon Græco-Latinum et Latino-Græcum: studio et opera Josephi Hill: editio duodecima.

SENECA. Senecæ Opera: edited by Justus Lipsius; printed at Antwerp in 1615, with notes by the Editor.

SWIFT, JONATHAN, Dean of St. Patrick's, born 1667.

VALPY, EDWARD REV., Master of the Grammar School, Norwich. *Elegantiae Latinae*, or Rules and Exercises illustrative of elegant Latin Style; third edition.

VERGARA. Mentioned on the authority of the Port Royal Latin Grammar.

VOSSIUS, GERHARDUS JOANNES, born 1577. *Commentariorum Rhetoricorum Sive Oratoriarum Institutionum, Libri Sex*: quint. edit. 1681. Marburgi.

WARD, DR., one of the Gresham Professors: mentioned on the authority of Chambers' and Rees' Cyclopedias; in Rees, his work is thus quoted, Vol. i. Lect. 22.

WHATELEY, RICHARD, D.D., sometime Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford, afterwards Principal of St. Alban's Hall, and now Archbishop of Dublin. *Elements of Rhetoric*; third edition, 1830. *Elements of Logic*; fourth edition, 1831.

Most, if not all, of our cyclopedias, and many of our grammars, say something of punctuation. Chambers speaks of Buffier, a French author, who wrote upon the subject.

#### No. IX.

In founts of letters, in which the number of the letter *m* is 3000, and the number of the letter *e* is 12000, the proportions of the common points have been as follows:—

|                                | One Hundred<br>Years ago. | Fifty<br>Years ago. | At the<br>present time. |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Comma-points.....              | 4000.....                 | 5000.....           | 4500                    |
| Semicolon-points....           | 1000.....                 | 1000.....           | 800                     |
| Colon-points.....              | 1000.....                 | 1000.....           | 600                     |
| Full-points .....              | 2000.....                 | 2500.....           | 2000                    |
| Interrogative-Points, 500..... | 400.....                  | 200                 |                         |
| Notes of Admiration, 300.....  | 400.....                  | 150                 |                         |

## NOTES.

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(<sup>1</sup>) Alio autem fine tractabimus de periodis, colis, comatis, quàm solent Grammaticorum filii, Hi non aliâ de causâ ea considerant, quàm ut monstretur ratio bene interpungendi. At Rhetores, quia orationem ea reddunt suavem, ac perspicuam.—*Vossius*, cap. iii. de periodo, s. 1.

(<sup>2</sup>) Lowth's Introduction to English Grammar: edition of 1775. This extract is copied to a *letter* and a *point*, as in the original.

(<sup>3</sup>) Campbell's Philosophy of Rhetoric; book iii. c. iii. part ii.

(<sup>4</sup>) Port Royal Latin Grammar, c. xv: Of Punctuation.

(<sup>5</sup>) These divisions were called *Stichoi*; and at the end of each manuscript it was usual to specify the numb-



er of *Stichoi* which it contained.—*Horne's* Introduction to the Scriptures, vol. ii., part i., c. iv., s. ii. : Account of the Antient and Modern Punctuation of the New Testament.

The following, but different specimen of the passage given in the text, proves how much *pointing* facilitates the reading of a passage :—

that the aged men besobergravesound in faith in  
love the aged women likewise in behaviour as becometh holiness  
not false accusers not given to much wine teachers of good things

(<sup>6</sup>) *Ibidem*.

The manner of pointing, by assigning to each passage a separate line, may perhaps lead some persons to infer, that for a like purpose the divisions of the chapters of the Old and New Testaments into verses was made; this was not the case; they were so divided for more convenient reference, and the division is a work of comparatively modern date :—Robert Stephens, an English printer, about the middle of the sixteenth century, first divided the New Testament into verses : Athias, a Jew, in 1661, divided the Hebrew Bible in like manner. The division of the Scriptures into chapters and verses has given rise to the complaint, that it has been to the injury of the interpretation; for it is alleged, that by it many passages are now severed which ought to be united, and others are considered to be united, which ought to be looked upon as separate.—*Horne's* Introduction to the Scriptures, vol. ii., part i., ch. iv., s. ii.—But it is probable that when the text was first marked with numbers, that it was not divided into those distinct parts, commonly called verses, in which the English version now stands :

in some copies of the Bible, in various languages, the text goes on continuously, as in the following example:—

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. <sup>2</sup> And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness *was* upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. <sup>3</sup> And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. <sup>4</sup> And God saw the light, that *it was* good: and God divided the light from the darkness.”

(<sup>7</sup>) Aristotle on Rhetoric, lib. iii., c. ix.

(<sup>8</sup>) Cicero: Ad Marc. Brutum Orator; de oratione numerosâ, periodis, membris, et incisus.

(<sup>9</sup>) Ibidem.

(<sup>10</sup>) Quintilian: De institutione oratoricâ, lib. ix., c. iv.

(<sup>11</sup>) Cicero: Ad Marc. Brutum Orator. The opinion expressed in the text, has been formed not from any single passage, but upon the work as a whole.

By an error, reference is made in the text to the work of Cicero entitled *De Claris Oratoribus*, instead of *Ad Marc. Brutum Orator*.

(<sup>12</sup>) In music the smallest interval is sometimes called a comma.

(<sup>13</sup>) Since the text has been printed, I have met with a folio edition of Seneca, printed at Antwerp in 1615, and edited by Lipsius. “Interpungere consuevimus cùm



scribimus," (Epistolæ, 40,) is Seneca's phrase; and the editor adds the following note:—"notis post singula verba positis; neque enim alia adhuc interpunctio usurpata antiquis."

(<sup>14</sup>) See Appendix, No. 4.

(<sup>15</sup>) The earliest printers were oftentimes the authors, translators, or editors of the books they printed: each one cut his own types, made his own ink, set up the types, read his own proofs, and worked off the sheets.—The Guide to Trade: The Printer: Charles Knight.

(<sup>16</sup>) The subject of tropes, or the use of words in secondary meanings, being important in composition, the following extract from Blair's Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres, is given:—

"At the first rise of language, men would begin with giving names to the different objects which they discerned or thought of. This nomenclature would, at the beginning, be very narrow. According as men's ideas multiplied, and their acquaintance with objects increased, their stock of names and words would increase also. But to the infinite variety of objects and ideas, no language is adequate. No language is so copious, as to have a separate word for every separate idea. Men naturally sought to abridge this labour of multiplying words *in infinitum*; and in order to lay less burden on their memories, made one word, which they had already appropriated to a certain idea or object, stand also for some other idea or object, between which and the primary one, they found, or fancied, some relation. Thus the preposition, *in*, was originally invented to express the circumstance

of place : ' The man was killed *in* the wood.' In progress of time, words were wanted to express men's being connected with certain conditions of fortune, or certain situations of mind, and some resemblance or analogy being fancied between these, and the place of bodies, the word, *in*, was employed to express men's being so circumstanced ; as, one's being *in* health, or *in* sickness, *in* prosperity, or *in* adversity, *in* joy, or *in* grief, *in* doubt, or *in* danger, or *in* safety. Here we see this preposition, *in*, plainly assuming a tropical signification, or carried off from its original meaning, to signify something else which relates to, or resembles it.

" Tropes of this kind abound in all languages ; and are plainly owing to the want of proper words. The operations of the mind and affections, in particular, are, in most languages, described by words taken from sensible objects. The reason is plain. The names of sensible objects were, in all languages, the words most early introduced ; and were, by degrees, extended to those mental objects of which men had more obscure conceptions, and to which they found it more difficult to assign distinct names. They borrowed, therefore, the name of some sensible idea, where their imagination found some affinity. Thus we speak of a *piercing* judgment, and a *clear* head ; a *soft* or a *hard* heart ; a *rough* or a *smooth* behaviour. We say, *inflamed* by anger, *warmed* by love, *swelled* with pride, *melted* into grief : and these are almost the only significant words which we have for such ideas.

" When we design to intimate the period at which a state enjoyed most reputation or glory, it were easy to employ the proper words for expressing this ; but as this is readily connected, in our imagination, with the flour-

ishing period of a plant or a tree, we lay hold of this correspondent idea, and say, 'The Roman empire flourished most under Augustus.' *The leader of a faction*, is plain language; but because the head is the principal part of the human body, and is supposed to direct all the animal operations, resting upon this resemblance, we say, 'Cataline was the *head* of the party.' The word *Voice*, was originally invented to signify the articulate sound, formed by the organs of the mouth; but, as by means of it men signify their ideas and their intentions to each other, *voice* soon assumed a great many other meanings, all derived from this primary effect. 'To give our *voice*' for any thing, signified, to give our sentiment in favour of it. Not only so; but *voice* was transferred to signify any intimation of will or judgment, though given without the least interposition of voice in its literal sense, or any sound uttered at all. Thus, we speak of listening to the *voice* of conscience, the *voice* of nature, the *voice* of God. This usage takes place, not so much from barrenness of language, or want of a proper word, as from an allusion which we choose to make to *voice*, in its primary sense, in order to convey our idea, connected with a circumstance which appears to the fancy to give it more sprightliness and force."

The punctuation of the above extract has been exactly followed.

(17) Whatley's Elements of Rhetoric: part iii., c. ii., s. xii.; 3rd edition.

(18) Periodus est vel ἀφελῆς, h. e. ἀπλῆ, sive *simplex*; vel πολύκωλος, sive *composita*, quæ Aristoteli est ἡ ἐν τοῖς κωλοῖς περιόδος.—Vossius, Rhet. Instit., lib. iv.

(<sup>19</sup>) It is rather from necessity than choice that I have made use of the word *sentence*, as synonymous with period.

(<sup>20</sup>) Valpy's *Elegantiae Latinae*, intended for the Latin Student, can with advantage be referred to by an English one; although his only aim is grammatically to understand his own language.

(<sup>21</sup>) *Περίοδος*; circuitio, circuitus, ambages, amfractus, ambitus, ambitio, periodus, certa verborum comprehensio perfectum sensum continens;—ex *Περί et οδος*. Hederici Lexicon.—The act of going round or making a tour or circuit, a passage round, a circuit, a circumference, a tour round the country, especially sailing round the coast, a period in general, a cycle, periodical return or revolution as that of a planet, a regular sentence or period in rhetoric. *Donovan's Greek and English Lexicon*.—λέγω δὲ περίοδον λέγειν ἔχουσιν ἀρχὴν καὶ τελευτὴν αὐτὴν καθ' αὐτὴν καὶ μέγεθος εὐδύνοπτον. *Aristotelis Rhetorica*, part iii., c. ix.—Quem Græci *περίοδον*, nos tum abitum, tum circuitum, tum comprehensionem, aut continuationem, aut circumscriptionem dicimus. *Cicero*: Ad Marc. Brutum Orator.—*Periodus*, a period or perfect sentence. *Ainsworth*.

(<sup>22</sup>) Campbell in his *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, book iii., c. iii., of complex periods, in a note, uses the same example of a loose sentence.

(<sup>23</sup>) Whatley's *Elements of Rhetoric*, part iii., c. ii., s. xii.; 3rd edition.

(<sup>24</sup>) MEN, quidem, indeed. ΔΕ vero, but; answer-

ing to *Μεν*. *ΤΕ* que, atque, and.—Port Royal Greek Grammar, book vi., c. xiii.

(<sup>25</sup>) With this quotation from Dr. Whateley no liberties have been taken; the punctuation has been exactly followed.

(<sup>26</sup>) *Asyndeton*: without a conjunction; want of a conjunction.

(<sup>27</sup>) Campbell's *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, book iii., c. iii., of complex periods; 11th edition. With this quotation no liberties have been taken; the punctuation of the original is exactly followed.

(<sup>28</sup>) *Κωλον*; *membrum ut pes, lacertus, crus*; *pars periodi*: *Hederici Lexicon*.—Colon, a member of a sentence: *Ainsworth's Dictionary*.—*Membra quædam, quæ Græci κωλα vocant*: *Cicero ad Marc. Brutum Orator*.

(<sup>29</sup>) Colon iisdem [*Rhetoribus*] *est sententia perfecta*; *sed relata*;—*sive est pars periodi suo fulta verbo*: *Vossius Rhet. Instit. lib. iv., de periodo*.

(<sup>30</sup>) Cicero considered that period to be the best, which consists of four members. *Constat enim ille ambitus et plena comprehensio è quatuor ferè partibus, quæ membra dicimus, ut et aures impleat, et ne brevior sit, quàm satis sit, neque longior*: *Ad Marc. Brutum Orator*.—Quintilian says, a period has at least two members; most commonly it has four; but frequently contains more. *Habet periodus membra minimum duo: medius numerus videtur quatuor: sed recipit frequenter et plura*.

Modus ei a Cicerone aut quatuor senariis versibus, aut ipsius spiritus modo terminatur. Præstare debet, ut sensum concludat; sit aperta, ut intelligi possit: non immodica, ut memoria contineri: Quintiliani de Inst. Orat., lib. ix., c. iv. de compositione.—Vossius allows a period to consist of two, three, or four colons. Periodus πολυκῶλος [composita] δίκῶλος [bimembris], vel τρὶκῶλος [trimembris], vel τετράκῶλος [quadrimembris].—Rhet. Instit., lib. iv.

(<sup>31</sup>) Κομμα; segmen, fragmentum, incisum, pars periodi, nota, signum; Hederici Lexicon.—Pars minima et orationis fragmentum; Schrevelii Lexicon.—A piece cut off or cut out, a slice, an incisum, a short division of a period; Donovan's Greek and English Lexicon.—A part of a member in a period marked thus (,); Ainsworth's Latin and English Dictionary; 4to.

(<sup>32</sup>) Cùm Græci κόμματα, et κῶλα nomenclant, nos non rectè *incisa*, et *membra* dicamus.—Cicero: *Ad. Marc. Brutum Orator*.

(<sup>33</sup>) His [rhetoribus] commata est sententia imperfecta, sive pars periodi composita sine verbo.—Vossius, lib. iv., c. iii.

(<sup>34</sup>) It seems that some have regarded clauses either as colons or commas, according to their length: Vossius says, "Interim illud non ignorandum, sæpe et commata colorum, et cola commatum magnitudinem habere:"—he adds, Demetrius and Hermogenes teach that the colon and comma differ only in length: that some think that a clause which contains not more than seven, others eight

syllables, is a comma; but that which exceeds eight is a colon:—again, that a colon may contain seventeen syllables; and if it contains more, it is named a lengthy [oblongum] colon:—"Demetrius et Hermogenes docent, colon, et comma, solâ differunt magnitudine. Nam quod intra septimam, vel, ut alii malunt, octavam se syllabam continet, id comma est. At quod octo syllabarum numerum excedit, est colon. Potest autem et septendecim esse syllabarum, instar versus Heroici: ut, *Quorum ego de sententiâ non debeo disputare*. Quod verò hunc modum excedit, id κῶλον oblongum nominatur: Hermogeni dicitur χοινορένῆς, q. d. in modum funis protensum. Istiusmodi est illud: *Jam verò virtuti C. Pompeji quæ potest oratio par inveneri?*" However, Vossius acknowledges that there were those, among whom was Julius Scaliger (lib. iv. de re poetica, c. xxv.), who opposed this doctrine concerning colons and commas; denying that any account is to be taken of them in respect to their length: "Verùm qui hanc de commatis colisque doctrinam oppugnant, (quos inter Julius Scaliger) negant, in iis longitudinis, aut brevitatís, habendam esse rationem." The conclusion of Vossius appears to be this, that even what the Grammarians termed a *period*, Rhetoricians sometimes called a *colon*, and sometimes a *comma*:—"Rhetores verò, quod Grammatici nuncupant *periodum*, sæpe non *periodum*, sed nunc *colon*, nunc etiam *comma* esse dicunt;" and that orators are bound to look not only to the number but also to the nature and quantities (whether long or short) of their syllables, and to their measure in time: "Fit hoc, tum quia Orator non ita est servili ingenio, ut dicendi libertas numero syllabarum tantopere sit adstringenda: tum etiam quia Oratoris est, non solum syllabarum attendere numerum, sed etiam naturam, ac quant-



itatem : unde et multi commata colaque definiunt non syllabarum numero, sed temporum."—*Vossius*, Rhet. Inst. De periodo.

(<sup>35</sup>) Παρέθεσις; interpositio, interjectio, insertio, nomen figuræ grammaticæ, figura rhetorica : Hederici Lexicon. —Quam nos *interpositionem* vel *interclusionem* dicimus, Græci παρέθεσιν vocant, dum continuationi sermonis medius aliquis sensus intervenit; *Ego cum te (mecum enim sæpiissime loquitur) patriæ reddidissem.*—*Quintilian*, lib. ix., c. iii. This passage is not to be found in Ingram's edition, and is taken from a copy edited by Edmund Gibson, M.A., and printed at Oxford 1695. The word *inclusio* leads to the inference that, in the time of Quintilian, the parenthesis-points were used. Ainsworth translates *Parenthesis* thus :—a clause put into the midst of another sentence, which, being left out, the sense continueth entire.

(<sup>36</sup>) An Hyperbaton is the mixture or inversion of the order of words : Port Royal Latin Grammar, b. vii., c. vi.

(<sup>37</sup>) Kett's Elements of General Literature, vol. i.—Language : chap. iii.

(<sup>38</sup>) Sir James Burrow is quoted as an authority from a paper of his, entitled "A few thoughts upon pointing, and some other helps towards perspicuity and expression. By J. B., F.R.S. and F.S.A. Printed 1768." Sir James was Master of the King's Bench, and is eminently known by the profession of the law as a reporter. His "few thoughts on pointing" are added, by way of appendix,



to the first volume of the first edition of his Settlement Cases. Since the greater part of the text has been in the press, I have stumbled on the following notice: "The Thoughts upon Pointing have been much enlarged and improved; and published as an essay on punctuation, entitled '*De ratione et usu interpungendi*.' Sold by Edward Brooke, Bell Yard; price 1s. 6d."

(<sup>39</sup>) Blair's Lectures on Philosophy and Belles Lettres: Lect. xvii.; Figures of Speech. The rest of what Blair says is so much to the purpose, that it ought to have formed a part of the text; the omission shall be supplied in this place:—"Nothing has a worse effect than the frequent and unseasonable use of them [notes of exclamation]. Raw juvenile writers imagine, that, by pouring them forth often, they render their compositions warm and animated. Whereas quite the contrary follows. They render it frigid to excess. When an author is always calling upon us to enter into transports which he has said nothing to inspire, we are both disgusted and enraged at him. He raises no sympathy, for he gives us no passion of his own, in which we can take part. He gives us words, and not passion; and, of course, can raise no passion, unless that of indignation. Hence I am inclined to think, *he* was not much mistaken, who said, that when, on looking into a book, he found the pages thick bespangled with the point which is called, 'Punctum admirationis,' he judged this to be a sufficient reason for his laying it aside. And indeed were it not for the help of this 'punctum admirationis,' with which many writers of the rapturous kind so much abound, one would be often at a loss to discover, whether or not it was exclamation which they aimed at."

(<sup>40</sup>) Cobbett's Grammar of the English Language.—Letter xiv., p. 156; Points and Marks.

(<sup>41</sup>) One of the most determined advocates of the dash is a writer named Justin Brennan.—See Brennan, in Appendix, No. VIII.

(<sup>42</sup>) Blair's Lectures on Philosophy and Belles Lettres : Lecture xvii. ; Figures of Speech.

(<sup>43</sup>) See Appendix, No. VIII. ; Ward, Dr.

(<sup>44</sup>) Quæ κόμματα Græci vocant, nos incisa dicimus : κῶλον illi, nos membrum.—Cicero : Ad Marc. Brutum Orator.

(<sup>45</sup>) *Membrum* autem est sensus numeris conclusus, sed a toto corpore abruptus, et per se nihil efficiens : id enim, *O callidos homines !* perfectum est ; at remotum a cæteris, vim non habet : ut per se manus, et pes, et caput : et, *O rem excogitatam ! o ingenia metuenda !* Quando ergo incipit corpus esse ? cum venit extrema conclusio.—*Quinct.* lib. ix., c. iv.

(<sup>46</sup>) As illustrations of the assertion, that the *sentences* referred to in this part of the text are deserving of little more consideration than a common puzzle, the following examples are given ;—

Ibis ; redibis ; nunquam per bella peribis.

Ibis ; redibis nunquam ; per bella peribis.

Thou shalt go; thou shalt return; never in war shalt thou perish.

Thou shalt go; thou shalt return never; in war shalt thou perish.

---

Every lady in this land  
Hath *twenty* nails on each hand,  
Five-and-twenty on hands and feet,  
And this is true without deceit.

Every lady in this land  
Hath twenty nails; on each hand  
Five; and twenty on hands and feet;  
And this is true without deceit.

---

Edouardum occidere noli; timere bonum est.

Edouardum occidere noli timere; bonum est.

To shed King Edward's blood  
Refuse; to fear I count it good.

To shed King Edward's blood  
Refuse to fear; I count it good.

---

Charles the First walked and talked half an hour after his head was cut off.

Charles the First walked and talked;—half an hour after his head was cut off.

My name is Tom Tinkler and, what do you think ?  
I'll shave you for nothing and give you to drink.

My name is Tom Tinkler, and, *what !* do you think  
I'll shave you for nothing, and give you to drink?

---

I beg to observe that that that that that honourable  
gentleman used ought to have been which.

I beg to observe that, that *that*, that, that honourable  
gentleman used ought to have been *which*.

---

On this part of the subject, Sir James Burrow says as follows :—"Every school-boy is furnished with evasive Answers of Oracles, wherein the different disposition of the Points not only rendered the Sense *ambiguous*, but was sometimes capable of giving it *two directly contrary* Meanings. In other Instances, gross apparent *Falsehoods* may be changed into very simple *Truths*, and simple *Truth* into gross *Falsehood*, by the mere Alteration of the Places of the Points. So that the same *identical* Words may be either *undeniably true*, or *exceedingly doubtful*, or *absurdly false*, just as they happen to be pointed, or as the Points may be changed from one Place to another : And it often happens in Fact, that great Confusion and Uncertainty does arise from wrong Pointing, or from the total Neglect of using any Points at all. *This alone* seems to prove the Necessity of paying *some* Attention to Punctuation." Notwithstanding what Sir James says, I deliberately re-assert, that if a sentence *absolutely* requires one point to make plain the author's

meaning,—or if, by pointing, it can be made to bear more meanings than one, it is a *faulty* sentence, which cannot be properly mended by pointing or re-pointing; but only by recasting it:—the use of points is to facilitate the reading of a composition.

(<sup>47</sup>) Henry Home, Lord Kames, Elements of Criticism.

(<sup>48</sup>) “The original records of acts of parliament, verbose deeds of conveyance, or marriage settlements, have not a single stop from beginning to end.”—Sir James Burrow. The practice of not pointing records and deeds still continues. A professional friend tells me that in one of the reports on the public records, punctuation is spoken of, but I have not found it.

(<sup>49</sup>) Blair's Lectures on Philosophy and Belles Lettres. Lecture xi. ; Structure of Sentences.













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